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**Picturing the Teacher:  
Arts-Based Research and Reflection in Student Teachers**

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**Picturing the Teacher:  
Arts-Based Research and Reflection in Student Teachers**

**by**

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**Thesis**

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## **Dedication**

To my beloved McSweens, and all they do. Henson, your gentle warmth and empathy feels like a comforting blanket, and your reflective nature reframes my world daily. Jasper, your tough love and easy laugh constantly remind me of what is important, and your enormous changes in our time here in Austin marvel me.

Jon, you are simply the best individual I know. Thank you so much for this life and family we've built together. It's all gravy from here, baby!



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## **Abstract**

### **Picturing the Teacher: Arts-Based Research and Reflection in Student Teachers**

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Preservice art educators come to a pointed change during their student teaching semester. Not only do daily demands and expectations increase, but dedicated studio time typically diminishes. Therefore, this grounded theory study examined how incorporating arts-based research during the student teaching semester could contribute to the reflection and growth of four student teachers.

This study collected data through the categories of: blog posts, in-class discussions, a triptych art-making assignment, and semi-structured interviews. The student teachers exhibited varying degrees of reflective understanding and art-making within the following themes: identity, reflection, growth and change, teaching and learning, relationships, and reflexivity. The data were analyzed using Pearse's (1983) and Rolling's (2013) Models of Understanding/Art-Making. Results indicate that reflection, facilitated through supportive group discussions, individualized

arts-based research, and blogging contributed to these student teachers' understanding of their development from students, to student teachers, to teachers.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

Current education research recommends the mastery of a host of habits and behaviors to be an effective and efficient student teacher. Specifically to the arts, Kerchner (2006) suggests the following habits: trusting oneself, curiosity, openness of mind, a sharing nature, supportive inclinations, observational habits, and listening skills. This is not to mention the long wish list from those advocating for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills for educators, including global awareness, financial literacy, and innovation (“P21 Educators,” n.d.). For each internet search to locate the best framework for educators’ development, there is a new or different resource. This plethora of information suggests that the expectations of teachers is a well-researched and highly analyzed topic.

How is an emerging teacher to find his or her own version of *their best educator* with so much outside influence? How is the new educator to know the proper actions to take? In addition to lists of necessary skills educators must possess, current research also suggests that educators should be highly reflective of their practice. Bullough and Baughman (1997) believe that “teacher development is best understood in relationship to biography, to the unfolding and telling and retelling of a life” (p. 27). They argue that the narrative reasoning of storytelling helps to form a teacher’s identity, and encourages further development. When relating the act of making art to the reflective process, Mottram (2009) acknowledges that those labeled as creative practitioners are “linked to their propensity to generate valued objects or experiences through the actions of their

touch” (p. 231). The idea of an art educator using their chosen subject to inform more than their lesson plans is intriguing. Within these very different skill sets and outlooks on proficiency and achievement, is art-making where the preservice art educator might find their best path?

My research was centered upon student teachers’ exploration of arts-based reflection during the very formative semester of student teaching. My theory was that these artistic practices would promote performance and confidence for the student teachers. The results of this research now offers insight on best practices for emerging art educators, especially when faced with the unique demands of the art classroom. These results also offer insight on the effectiveness of reflective strategies used in preservice teachers’ artwork, commentary, and written reflections.

The focus of my thesis involved the student teaching experience of four individuals from the art education program at a large university in the western United States. These preservice teachers used arts-based research methods to reflect upon their encounters, struggles, triumphs, and the perspectives they gained over the course of the semester. I observed their contributions from in-class sessions, blog posts, and artistic creations for the course. I also conducted interviews with the participants at the end of the semester.

#### **CENTRAL RESEARCH QUESTION**

How does reflection contribute to preservice students’ understanding of their development from student, to student teacher, to teacher?

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

I chose to study art-making as a reflective practice among student teachers, because I wanted to explore the potential benefits of using arts-based research during their student teaching experiences. I hoped the practice would inform and benefit the student teachers' performance, confidence, and satisfaction. I found tremendous motivation and alignment with Lawton's (2012) decree:

Art teacher educators committed to promoting a holistic approach for young people should implement...an approach that encourages art education students to continue to develop as artists and to use their art-making interests as inspiration for their own future curriculum planning and classroom-based research...as preparers of art teachers, we need to practice what we preach, to actively model those values and behaviors that we want our preservice and in-service teachers to develop. Only if we model highly effective art educator behaviors for our college-level students will they in turn be able to model those same behaviors for their P-12 learners. (p. 166)

This research also contributes to the understanding of how arts-based research can impact the student teaching experience. With the specific art-making habits that support personal reflection from the very start of their career, maybe these art educators can avoid professional burnout and classroom frustration in the future.

## **MOTIVATIONS FOR RESEARCH**

### **Personal Motivations**

Reflection, the one thing I did not provide time and mental energy for in my hectic teaching days, found its own way in to my life. My waking life as a teacher was full of minute-by-minute decisions and responses, but my dreaming life was full of the nastiest possible repercussions that could have evolved from the day's choices. Every single night. Furious violent mothers; injured or evil children; the uncomfortable

conversation with a colleague; thankfully, finally taking a nonsensical turn that even dreaming logic would not allow to continue, and I'd finally wake up. The abrupt end to such a nightmare was of little comfort, however, because in my mind it had still "happened," and I was due to return to the scene in a matter of hours. What use was there in going back to sleep, when I had only dream about the worst parts of the day again?

When it dawned on me to provide time for reflection, it took months of engaging in several outlets to find my comfort zone. Ultimately, I found just one solution to claim. Seeing a workshop on visual journaling at a teacher's conference, I signed up. The combination of words, trinkets, personalization, and even a hard non-descript cover to surround and protect my thoughts all spoke to me in a way simple journaling or multimedia pieces never had. Years of bad-day dreams were no longer a factor in my teaching life (see Figure 1). My teaching improved as well, as I worked my way to revelations, deeper understandings, solutions, lesson ideas, and realizations of how to handle the aspects of teaching that are not meant to be digested instantaneously.



Figure 1: Personal Visual Journal Page

What good could it have done, for my emotionally charged sleep patterns, to have maintained a firm grasp on how to reflect from the beginning of my career? How much creative angst had built up inside of me after years denying myself a dedicated studio time, space, or even mindset? Why wasn't this being taught to *every single art education major*, along with data, textbooks, associations, clubs, and organizations to spread the gospel? I'd needed reflective art-making like air and water; I am just fortunate that I did not leave the field before I found a way to create the most professional version of myself.

## **Professional Motivations**

What if there was a way to facilitate such creativity that preservice teachers could manage the workload of lesson plans, grading, and seating arrangements as well as keep a strong and inspired artist's portfolio? What if the excitement found in teaching a great fourth grade class period carried over into making a beautiful painting? What if the momentum of a successfully thrown ceramic piece transcended into a solution for how to approach a specific behavioral concern in second grade?

For a Visual Art educator, the connection between everyday life and creative inspiration can be a strong and sustaining facet. The loss or curtailing of such a facet of life can be difficult to overcome or redirect. With new and plentiful demands placed upon a student art teacher, entering the classroom for the first time can cause the blend of inspiration and duty to fall off balance (Hume, 2014).

The problem with losing one's connection to art-making and inspiration is that there is just enough creative energy traveling on the periphery of a preservice art educator's life to distract them during their student teaching semester. Great student work, successful project exemplars made while planning lesson, excited pupils eager to create for themselves, well received student art shows, and school-wide cultural events can leave a student teacher feeling that their creativity is consoled and satisfied. But with a visit to an art gallery or notice of a particularly engaging artwork, student art teachers can discover that they feel disconnected from their own inspiration, art making techniques, art-making, and confidence.



What if there was a natural way to combine the daily challenges in the classroom with the very subject student art teachers instruct? What if the desire and exercise of creating art were fueled by the student art teacher's classroom experience on a regular basis? What if the artwork created by the student teacher motivated deeper understanding of the events of a typical working day, or even provided for perspective on handling specific concerns in a balanced and productive way? What if there was reflection, art, and creativity in every aspect of life for a student art educator?

What if arts-based research is a solution to art teacher burnout? By studying the experiences of one group of Visual Arts educators during their student teaching experience, I hope to discover that preservice teachers perceive that the combination of creation and reflection will leave them feeling engaged, successful, and prepared for their own classroom. I hope that these student art teachers will move forward into a field where they will remain, thrive, and succeed personally and professionally. I truly hope they consider arts-based reflection as a tool for their own benefit.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

My research exclusively studied one small cohort of university preservice students for the Fall 2014 semester. Dr. Lilith was the instructor for the university course, and there was a graduate student teaching assistant (TA) named Mary. The cohort I observed was completing their student teaching requirement in pursuit of state-level teacher certifications in art education. There were two males and two females. Three students were undergraduate students and one was a graduate student. Three of the students would be considered non-traditional students, based on their age, former careers,

and time away from college before pursuing their art education degree. I observed the four participants' contributions in blog posts, in-class discussions, triptych creations, and end of semester interviews. There were no observations or data collections beyond these categories, nor from any other students in the program. Therefore, results are not generalizable as they are specific to one set of art student teachers.

### **SIGNIFICANCE TO THE FIELD OF ART EDUCATION**

I strongly believe that the student teaching semester is a true educational awakening, but for the visual art preservice teacher, there is an added dimension of the loss of art-making time and studio access when student teaching occurs in most university programs. Maintaining a habit of reflecting upon one's career through art-making is a unique opportunity for visual art educators, one that other disciplines may not as readily employ. I argue that the field of art education, and higher education specifically, could benefit from implementing such methods throughout an art education, or visual arts studies, program. This thesis' explorations offer a potential pedagogical method to help prepare highly professional, reflective, and prepared art educators as they enter the field.

### **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The extensive opinions and variations of many of these terms will be more fully reported in the following chapter. For the purposes of this section, these abbreviated definitions serve to reflect my personal definitions among broad interpretations in and involving art education.

**Art-Making Process**

Anything that might be important in the creation, or that relates to the production of an artwork, including technology, time, treatment and use of materials, ideas interpretations and concepts, emotions, feelings, experiences, personal symbolism or representations, or the artist's intention and ethos can be considered as a part of the art-making process.

**Arts-Based Research**

For the purpose of this study, Arts-based research is the use of the artistic processes and actual making of artistic expressions and works, in any of the forms within the arts, as a means of understanding and examining experience and perception. Both researchers and the people involved in their research can participate in arts-based research (Larsen, 2010). Rolling (2013) asserts that arts-based research is "best at addressing questions that can neither be measured with exactitude nor generalized as universally applicable or meaningful in all contexts" (p. 8).

**Blog**

Since its appearance in 1995 (Huette, 2006), blogs have proliferated in personal, professional and educational realms at a breakneck pace. A blog is a website or web page on which an individual or collective group of contributors can record opinions, links to other sites, media from other sources, or information. Occasionally they serve as locations for very personal journal or diary style publications on the behalf of the blog author, or "blogger." Generally, as in the

case of the blog in this study, [exartedex.wordpress.com](http://exartedex.wordpress.com), blogs focus on one particular topic or subject.

### **Emerging Teacher**

This term refers to a classroom teacher, who is in the initial years of their teaching career. In teacher assessments, the emerging educator is typically teaching for his/her first to fourth year in the classroom. This term is synonymous with novice teacher.

### **Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative inquiry is a form of qualitative research that includes the gathering of narratives, written, oral, or visual, and focusing on the meanings and intentions that people associate with their experiences.

### **Reflective Practice**

“[Practitioners] frame the problem of the situation, they determine the features to which they will attend, the order they will attempt to impose on the situation, the directions in which they will try to change it. In this process, they identify both the ends to be sought and the means to be employed” (Schön, 1983). Reflective practice is used as a self-evaluation used to understand one’s own actions and the related reactions prompted for all involved. The purpose of this practice is to refine and possibly improve practice towards the practitioner’s ideal.

**Preservice Students/ Student Teacher**

Preservice students and student teachers are college students who are learning how to teach and practicing teaching for the first time, usually under the supervision of a veteran cooperating teachers, and a university advisor. A preservice student is a student enrolled in an education program, but not necessarily student teaching regularly in a classroom setting. The student teaching semester is a designated period of guided teaching, usually a full semester, in which the preservice teacher becomes a student teacher, and takes increasing responsibility for leading in the school experiences of a group of students, over a period of consecutive weeks. In many university art education programs, there is generally a seven-week placement in an elementary level art program, and an additional seven-week placement in a secondary level art program.

**Social Constructivism**

Social constructivism is often used interchangeably with social meanings. For the purposes of this study, social constructivism is simply the collective understandings, contexts, assumptions, and knowledge of a group. The reality that an individual lives and learns in is impacted and built with and by the people surrounding him or her. This theory ties in directly with the impact outside sources can have on an individual.

**Triptych**

Typically seen in the form of an altarpiece picture or carving in a church, a triptych is a form of artwork presented in three portions or sections. For the purposes of this study, our working definition of the triptych parted ways from

any assumption of panels or common materials between each of the three creations.

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter established the terms and my preferred meaning of each, as well as my personal and professional reasons that drew me to this specific research topic. I have expressed a deep concern and care for the field of art education, specifically for those yet to join us in the profession. I also made clear that my research involves one small group of students at a large public university in the western United States. Participants were observed during their student teaching placements in the Fall 2014 semester. In the following chapters, I expand upon this research, the specifics of the class requirements and students themselves, the results achieved, and share and analyze various examples of reflection and arts-based research.

In Chapter 2, I introduce into this research several scholars' perspectives on reflective art-making, blogs in the classroom, preservice teacher preparation, reflective practitioners in the classroom, and the development of professional identity. My chosen theoretical framework and alignments within broadly defined terms will be made clear throughout a review of literature.

In Chapter 3, I will outline my use of Grounded Theory methodology, as well as methodology that the student teachers in my study were asked to adopt, arts-based research. I will also explore and align my research among various current topics of the field at this moment in art education and related fields. Finally, I will specify the actions taken to validate my research.

In Chapter 4, I will describe the student teacher course, including the class calendar, various assignments, and participants involved in the study. The parameters of each assignment, in-person class topics, and end of semester interviews are made clear.

In Chapter 5, the data collected throughout the semester is disseminated and analyzed, with overarching themes and topics made clear. Each participant's contributions to the class will be assessed using Pearse's (1983) and Rolling's (2013) Three Models of Understanding/ Art-Making.

In Chapter 6, key findings will inform my future intentions for the use of reflection and arts-based research in the preservice teacher's preparation. I will analyze the benefits and areas needing additional research and further design.

This study is deeply important to me, as a veteran teacher in elementary and secondary art programs. My own experiences with student and emerging teachers during those years in the classrooms have led me to ponder on the best preparations for preservice teachers. It is my opinion that art educators need more support, and more tools in their *educational toolbox* to experience success and achieve career satisfaction. This research was one way I was able to offer support in the form of beneficial reflective habits that are uniquely engrained in art teachers' training and college education.

## **Chapter Two: Review of Literature**

The more that art educators consider their thoughts and actions as reverberating patterns and are conscious of the theoretical underpinnings of their approaches, the better they can control and the more they can become aware of the consequences and implications of their acts. (Pearse, 1983, p. 163)

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will provide context for the environment that preservice art educators face, both in the expectations placed upon them, the social and educational expectations placed upon emerging educators, and the changes many will experience once in the field.

Two teaching theories explored in this chapter are: professional identity development and the reflective practitioner. These theories are explored as idealized teacher development possibilities, as well as realistically within the context of this study.

Also covered in this chapter are rich explanations of the various categories of data collected for this study. Arts-based research, the research methodology employed by the study participants, is followed by an explanation of their communal blogging, and finally their shared art-making experiences.

As my thesis was formatted as a grounded theory study, the research foci and literature that informed my efforts are explained in a traditional Literature Review format. Each focus is then given direct context to my study. These connections are made apparent throughout this chapter in order to reflect the manner in which data collection and analysis coincided throughout my study.



## PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY: ISSUES FOR THE EMERGING ART TEACHER

### Prevailing Notions of the “Survival Years” of Teaching

It is amazing to see the number of educational books with “survival guide” in their titles. For example, Thompson’s *The First-Year Teacher’s Survival Guide* is now in its third edition (2013) and available on Kindle. Such a plethora of publications for such a small literary category makes the public opinion of emerging educators clear. Not only do these books acknowledge that this time is overwhelming for a teacher, it also suggests a lack of support and preparation offered to emerging teachers, or the lack of professionalism expected of those entering the field. This simple overview of “survival guides” and “how to” texts for educators brings evidence to my argument that art educators are more often taught how to teach their content, not how to prosper in their career as a single subject teacher. Major (2008) defiantly frames ‘creative’ as a negative:

We have seen many creative, adventurous teachers underestimate the importance of reliability in maintaining a stable and productive class. If your desk, home, and care are always a mess, if you habitually have trouble deciding what to order for dinner...we’re talking to you. (p. 28)

Feeling adept, appropriately prepared, successful, and fulfilled in the initial years of a teaching job seem the contrary to regular expectations. This is especially true for art educators, who could absolutely be labeled as ‘creative.’

In a brief analysis of the table of contents within three teacher’s guides (*The Teacher’s Survival Guide*, *First Day’s of School*, and *The Art Teacher’s Survival Guide for Secondary Schools*), two are geared for general education and one for visual art education. Several themes were immediately evident. In Major’s *The Teacher’s Survival*

*Guide* (2008) and Wong and Wong's *The First Days of School* (2009), both aimed toward general educators, entire chapters are devoted to professionalism, classroom management, communication, development opportunities and outlets, and the importance of preparation for instruction. However, Hume's *The Art Teacher's Survival Guide for Secondary Schools* (2014), focusing specifically on secondary art teachers, spends only 22 pages in the first chapter on professional concerns such as starting the year off well, maintaining organization with materials and classes, and how to gain support from various counterparts in a school environment. The remaining pages of Hume's three hundred-page book delve entirely into different media and subjects to inform the studio time of an art teacher's class. While this synthesis of art subjects is well-rounded and highly applicable to lesson writing, the fact that the title includes the word "survival" raises serious concerns for emerging art teachers who might hang their hopes for success on this book.

Perhaps there is a need for a different type of research, embracing a different goal for these emerging teachers. Perhaps the notion of teachers' unpleasant "survival years" could be erased from educators' collective mindset. By introducing professional means and modes of operation, rather than simply the nuts and bolts of how to teach curriculum, preservice teachers might find initiatives of their own productive, viable, and overarching goals. Such goals could serve as motivation and professionalism on their own terms over the course of a career. Perhaps these notions of "survival years" are based less on lack of knowledge and capability to perform in the teaching role, but more so on a lack of

introspection, reflection, and adaptation necessary to invigorate and sustain a successful experience for all emerging teachers.

### **Unspoken Rules of the Schools: The Hidden Curriculum**

Many student teachers I have worked with have mentioned being caught off guard by the “hidden curriculum” in their placement schools. Common hidden curricula, present in many school settings are: hegemony, harmony, idealistic behavior and performance. Giroux (1983) states, in *The Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education*:

Unfortunately, the nature and role of theory in many teacher-education programs provide little or no explanatory power for students to reflect critically on how pedagogy is informed by theory or on how specific ideological and material conditions inside and outside of the schools play a determining part in shaping as well as constraining different pedagogies. (p. 414)

As this study’s student teachers were immediately immersed into such understandings of hidden curriculum from the first day of their student teaching placement, hidden curriculum was discussed extensively and scrutinized in the student teaching seminar class at the university. When the student teachers entered the school settings, they were prepared to attune to the moral, behavioral, and subject-specific expectations and mandates that permeate the communities. Honest reflection was a focus of my thesis, specifically considering the tones and modeled behaviors recognized during each of the preservice teachers’ experiences. One desired outcome of the study was that the participants would find themselves able to easily and accurately assess the hidden curriculums and environments in each professional teaching experience they encountered.

## **Dissolution of the Ideal in Teaching: Building a New Persona**

Two phenomena that this section examines are the participants' transitioning self-identity as *student* to *teacher*, and the dissolution of the ideal teacher/ professional persona. Though two very different realizations, studies suggest that these two shifts occur roughly within the same time period in a typical education degree program, specifically in the final observation and student teaching semesters (Hardin, 2014; Hetrick, 2010; LaJevic & Powell, 2012). LaJevic and Powell (2012) frame this time with an analogy of a *knitted curriculum*, wherein preservice teachers navigate their efforts and new understandings. They explain:

Developing personal meaning of what it means to be an art teacher, one's own inner understanding is directly linked to her/his everyday experiences in the outside world (e.g., in the classroom, working with students, experimenting with art material, etc.). Conceived of in this way, a knitted curriculum suggests that it is a relational practice that unfolds through time, and that the knitted object is fabricated through and alongside dialogic encounters with self, other, and society. (p. 187)

During such a time of development in personal-professional identity for preservice teachers, there are several elements to consider. One critical factor to consider is the designation of importance on personal and professional art creation in one's teacher identity. Student teachers must already weigh so many factors of their previous self-identity, and what they aim to be as a professional, but art education student teachers must also integrate their artist identity into their professional identity. One focus of this research study was allowing the participants' pre-existing relationship with art-making to remain as prevalent, or if possible elevated in importance, as a reflective outlet. Utilizing their artist identity along with their educational knowledge in the student teaching

experience was a large motivation when formatting the curriculum and assignments for the university class in this study. As such, “relying on memories of being an artist was not enough for participants to feel secure in both artist and teacher roles” (Hatfield, Montana, & Defenbaugh, 2006, p. 44).

In a qualitative analysis of preservice educators’ discourse, Alsup (2006) states that the three mindsets of preservice teachers that succeed in a gentle transition from student to educator are:

(a) those who were able to begin to see the identity of teacher as nonunitary and therefore not completely at odds with their personal identities; (b) those who view their personal and professional identities in similarly uncomplicated or unitary ways (these students had little ideological conflict when taking on a rigidly perceived teacher identity); and (c) those whose tensions were primarily professional in nature, instead of personal. It seemed that professional contradictions and tensions were easier to resolve for the students, and they received better and more consistent mentorship about engaging in professionally oriented borderland discourse. (p. 182)

The formation of a student teacher’s professional identity also relies heavily on their preservice teacher preparation. According to Hatfield, Montana, and Defenbaugh (2006), if complications arise in a preservice teacher’s identity transitions, “reasons for this identity conflict are numerous...degrees granted without authentic art education coursework, either too much or too little focus in studio art, general educators hired as art teachers, and art-educators’ perceived lower status in the art world” (Hatfield, Montana, & Defenbaugh, 2006, p. 43). If a university program makes a point to maintain the identities of artist, teacher, learner, and community member, throughout the course of a program, might we see more capable, connected, and confident art teachers? Therefore, how might a student teaching seminar course motivate student teachers to reflect upon

their multiple classroom experiences regularly, in order to process and fully conceive of the professional issues and trends they experience?

## **THE REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER: ESPECIALLY FOR THE ART TEACHER**

### **Job Satisfaction: The Big Secret**

A significant factor in the successful transition from college student to teaching professional is satisfaction in the field. Leaving behind the flexible schedule of a college student to begin a 40-hour workweek is a large change for a student teacher. Converting to daily lesson preparation and nearly constant interaction with students, with less time to consider theories, and more time and effort being dedicated to active engagement with students, is immediate in this transition. The student teaching semester gives a preview to this lifestyle change, but as the school calendar, paycheck, and classroom management issues becomes reality for the foreseeable future, emerging teachers may find themselves taking stock of their career choice. As Herbst (1989) insists in *And Sadly Teach*, “All of these circumstances—the lack of authority and stability, of sensible working conditions and adequate compensation—add up to one major defect: the denial of truly professional consideration for teachers” (p. 197).

In *Die Empty: Unleash Your Best Work Everyday*, a book on increasing job satisfaction and significant accomplishment in one’s profession, Henry (2013) argues that there are three categories of “work” one does in a career: mapping, making, and meshing. He describes *mapping* as planning and plotting objectives. *Making* is simply the actual doing of the planned work. Finally, *meshing* involves the acts that stretch and mold a person, acts such as “acquiring and developing new skills, reinforcing or enhancing your

knowledge, cultivating your curiosity, or generating a better understanding of the context for your work” (Henry, 2013, pp. 20-26). Different combinations of these three forms of work exemplify different types of workers, and designate the worker capable of balancing and implementing all three as being the optimum worker. Henry calls this person the *developer*, one able to work urgently and diligently, who creates lasting results, while learning and reacting to making experiences.

Henry’s model informed this research study when considering the student art teacher as an arts-based researcher. So much of art instruction is perceived as solely *making*. Working from Henry’s theory, the making portion in the day of an art educator is in the instruction and interaction with the students, as well as their participation in a school setting. If lessons, rubrics, material gathering, and exemplar creation are all mapping, then when might an art educator engage in activities that *mesh*? When preservice teachers, emerging into the role of teacher, have an opportunity to create and adjust a preferred balance for their careers at the onset, they will be more aware of their feelings and performance, and thereby more satisfied, or equipped to find satisfaction, with their careers.

### **Pedagogy as Creative Action**

The need for perceptive and inventive teachers is lamented in political propaganda (Pierce, 2011), demanded in organizational policy (Croft, 2015), and promised in college and university programs (“admissions UNCG,” n.d.). Despite all this, recruiting preservice students is a difficult task from the onset, given today’s educational climate.

Aronowitz (2013) reminds us that the educational system does not produce the type of thinkers to create or sustain efficacious learning environments in our society:

We can hear the retort: teachers as intellectuals is an oxymoron. They are trained to deliver the prescribed curriculum, not to become genuine creators of education. Those, it is claimed, who want to revert to the old-fashioned image of the teacher, and of the classroom, are out of step with the contemporary need to prepare students for the workplace....To educate students to be actors in the education process is to condemn them to marginalization. (p. xiv)

How, then, do universities train preservice teachers to teach, in order to avoid the marginalization of students and propagating substandard educational settings? In particular, how can art education teachers lead the way to implementing richer curriculum through engaging lessons in order to empower students?

One partnership between curriculum and creativity, explored by Lucero (2011), is the concept of *pedagogy as creative action*. When describing the inventive and generative stage of formulating a curriculum, Lucero recounts his approaches to his teaching practice as “allowing for all the makers of a robust art endeavor to dictate the trajectory of my curricular planning and pedagogical experimentation and execution” (pp. 95-96). In complete contrast to Lucero’s ideals, lesson planning is typically delivered to preservice teachers as stringent and formulaic concepts, even down to the various lesson plan formats, numerically designated objectives, and rigid quantities of time and materials, all pre-specified for every day of a lesson. Art education could, and should, be the one school subject that practices open, constructivist education. What explorations might art educators, and in turn their pupils, naturally take if the *trajectory* of a lesson was not predetermined? Perceiving each art class period as a situational learning



opportunity for both teacher and students could be a key to longevity for emerging educators. Art classes could be a place of learning and contribution for all, as expressed in Reardon's (2009) demand:

...to live out this 'being in the world of art,' the art teacher needs to be able to sustain the conviction that being an art teacher is in fact being an artist and to do this, to sustain this conviction, must disavow the world he now believes he belongs to, through separating the world of art 'as it exists' from the world of teaching art. Because in the world of art—the 'vulgar mercenary world'—he may be found wanting, he may have little or nothing to say whereas in the world of teaching this lack can be made up for through a focused intensity fuelled by the demands that are made on his generosity, time, and commitment to art, the kind of commitment that makes him a valued contributor to the work of those people making art and to the world of art. (pp. 12-13)

Teachers' art-making as a method of curriculum, creation, assessment, and reflection of the job makes art education an inspiration-driven endeavor. Luis Camnitzer (2014) puts it more bluntly, suggesting that a failure to incorporate pedagogy and art creation makes one lesser in their field. When asked if he saw a relationship in his artistic process between his writing, teaching, curating, and his production and exhibition of art, he responded:

I believe that any communication is by nature pedagogical—one tries to persuade one way or the other—so I don't see any particular difference between what is considered art and what is considered classroom activity....And all activities should be creative and help expand knowledge. So a noncreative curator or teacher is a waste of time, and a non-pedagogical artist tends to deal with self-indulgence and self-therapy and therefore isn't very useful either. I believe in empowerment. This means that the mission of a good teacher or a good artist is to help society to make them unnecessary, because those who are presently consumers of education or of art should be equipped to learn or create on their own, without intermediaries. Pedagogy for me, in that sense, is not a training device but an enabling tool, a way of helping viewers reach certain conclusions, and ultimately helping people access creation on their own without my assistance. (p. 95)

One focus of this study was to provide several meaningful and exploratory art-centered experiences for the participants, during their student teaching semester, in order to maintain the participants' personal connection to their artist identity.

### **Participants as Reflective Practitioners**

When one works collaboratively with others to shape a process through discussion, learning is deepened (Dawson, 2014). Shared reflection, or collective thoughts under careful consideration, helps learners to develop an awareness of possibilities within multiple situations. While various aspects of the student teaching experience were common among the four participants in this thesis study, the sharing and reflection upon specific differing aspects for each participant, in a whole group setting and in blog posts, greatly developed the participants' abilities as reflective practitioners. Schön (1991) divides reflection into two separate parts. First is *reflecting in action*, in which one might consider what they will do next, think on their feet, and consider what is transpiring within a time space as it is occurring (Schön, 1991). *Reflecting on action* occurs post – experience when one thinks back to what has happened, what they might do differently, or what was beneficial to learning (Schön, 1991).

While developing as reflective practitioners, the participants found moments alone and experiences that only they could relate to. In these times they experienced introspection, as evidenced in class discussions, their creations, and their blog posts. As Dawson (2014) explains,

Reflective thought invites us to closely consider what informs who we are as individuals...invites us to critically examine how beliefs and values, actions and

attitudes, our very institutions shape choice, influence collaborators and students, and significantly influence the results of our and our students' experiences. (p. 30)

As the reflective dialogue developed and became richer among the participants of my study, in both introspection and investigation during university classes and in blog posts, the participants moved beyond their roles as students, student teachers, and teachers. They became creators and writers with an increased awareness of their educational and art-making production. Most importantly, however, all participants engaged in reflection at some point during the course of the semester, and gained tremendous insight into their future careers.

### **Reflective Practice in the Classroom**

To ask questions is a part of being human. This search for understanding is the basis of learning. Bolin (1996) directs the responsibility of inquiry to the art education field, arguing, "Art educators must help people to understand that it is with the formation of questions and pursuit of answers that we should initiate and carry out our essential investigations into the visual arts" (p. 10). Dawson (2014) connects asking questions with artistic creation by stating:

From the initial imaginative spark of inspiration, to the deliberate choice of interpretation and purpose, to the ongoing desire for revision and rethinking, to the final decision of completion, to the reception of the experience or the work—reflection feeds each choice in the artistic process. (p. 27)

In the above quote, Dawson is describing the reflective teaching artist. The reflective educator is able to make use of their reflections to the benefit of the learning experience for all participants. Reflection can inform future lessons, and also direct the teacher to

adapt methods and procedures for immediate improvement. Likewise, Kerchner (2006) discusses a number of *tools* for art educators to develop a reflective mindset. While descriptions such as curiosity, sharing of thoughts, and seeking collegial support are all mentioned, the bulk of Kerchner's message is directed toward dealing with challenges. Preservice teachers deal with multiple challenges: from classroom management to lesson plan writing. Kerchner suggests that reflective practitioners "do not look for quick-fixes in dealing with classroom challenges" (p. 124), but rather create long-standing solutions through analysis and examination. To contrast the prevalent notion of *survival mode* based on the current moment for beginning teachers, exploring reflective problem-solving is a long-term strategy that would be best developed sooner rather than later in one's career. Unrath and Kerridge (2009) explain the reflective practice for the preservice teacher:

In the sphere of education, reflection fosters accountability. It confirms the importance of the act of teaching and examines outcomes with the evolution of a pedagogical approach in mind. Reflection in education often brings the awareness that perceptive empathy and altruistic zeal are the foundations of good teaching ethics.(p. 283)

Unrath and Kerridge point out reflection, awareness, empathy, and excitement as the strengths of a great teacher. Preservice teacher who reflect upon their teaching experiences through an artistic process could experience profound awareness of their personal beliefs and practices. Preservice teachers engaged in arts-based research would progress as such: initial creation, pause, revision, and adjustment of their creation. In this process a preservice teacher could experience a similar multi-step process as an artist. As an arts-based researcher, the preservice educator may derive clarity concerning their

teaching practice while engaged with their creation. For example, the arts-based researcher could synthesize and express their concept of their role in the classroom, the inspiration they feel in the career, and the responsibility they feel to deliver quality education for their pupils.

## **ARTS-BASED RESEARCH: A NATURAL FIT FOR ART TEACHERS**

### **Lots of Cooks in the Kitchen: What is Arts-based Research?**

There are still more researchers writing *about* arts-based research criteria than those producing examples of what it looks like in each area of the literary, visual, and performing arts. Thus, increased numbers of researchers need to experiment with hybrid forms and art for scholarship's sake, in order to continually refine our critical sensibilities. (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008, p. 12)

This particular quote cuts to the main conundrum of this study, which is the difficulty in finding a particular definition of arts-based research to frame my study.

Arts-based research first appealed to me as a lark, a fun experiment, and the culmination of several things that I enjoy: making and creating with art materials, writing, thinking and expressing artistically; all of which fall into one of the myriad of versions of arts-based research developed by various academics. While I feel a certain amount of valor in exploring this facet of art education after reading this quote, I do feel that arts-based research is positioned to be a well-established, deeply explored, and highly respected means of understanding in several fields, not just art education and surrounding arts fields. By encouraging my subjects to engage in arts-based research during their student teaching semester, I am, in a sense, positioning them to become proficient in this field as well. As Cahnmann-Taylor (2008) states, there is not enough of

this methodology practiced. Therefore, with a working knowledge of how to use this method of reflective research within one's career, I believe that the participants from my study will enter the field with a higher level of professionalism and experience with a reflective method of research from their own field.

Elliot W. Eisner is credited by multiple sources with creating the research methodology of "arts-based research" in the 1970s and 80s (Barone & Eisner, 2012; Cahmann-Talyor, 2008; O'Donaghue, 2009; Rolling, 2013; Sullivan, 2010). Initially explored within *educational criticism* (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008), the educator was valued, in a researcher-like role, as an authority or connoisseur within an arts-involved situation. This legitimacy of the educator to serve as the analyst, and eventually researcher, was the beginning of arts-based research as it is known today.

As with most things in research, however, many colleagues came to align, partially align, or fall in theoretical opposition to educational criticism. Various incarnations from Eisner's original version took hold: aesthetically based research (Bresler, 2006), performing arts-based education research (Sanders, 2006), and a/r/tography (Irwin & de Cosson, 2004). All maintain strong ties to arts-based research, while claiming specific researcher groups, contexts, and contents. Little consensus has been found in this vein of art and research interaction. This is best phrased by O'Donaghue (2009) in *Are We Asking the Wrong Questions in Arts-Based Research?* implying that larger parts to the methodology are missing:

The history of arts-based research suggests that arts-based researchers have not in any sustained manner considered the relationship between their practices and the practices of artists, or the different contexts in which they work. Nor have they

engaged in a process of mapping out their practice in an effort to find commonalities and resonances with the practice of artists. (O'Donaghue, 2009, pp. 354-355)

With that perspective in mind, I looked at ways in which the student teachers in my study could not only consider the practices of artists, but use their own practices *as* artists. MY study participants had experienced art, education, reflection, and creation in multiple forms, connecting their identities as researchers and artists throughout their time in the university art education program. Sullivan (2010) asserts, “A premise that informs arts-oriented inquiry is that the artist-student becomes proficient in not only appreciating the scope of knowledge that informs the field but develops the critical skill necessary to change it from within” (p. 191). Therefore, this time period in my study participants’ education, their student teaching semester, seemed an ideal time to adopt the role of researcher. By simultaneously taking on the roles of students teacher and researcher *of* their own student teaching experience, there was at least concurrent refocus and change.

Palmiter’s (2011) Art/Research Continuum (Table 1) illustrates the gambit of artistic researchers’ roles, focus, and theoretical underpinning of where art and research interact and overlap.

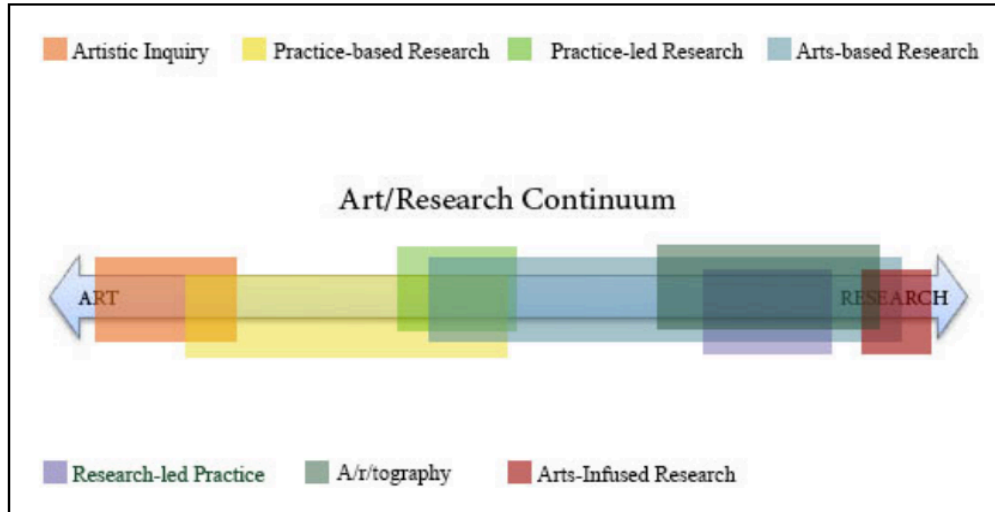


Figure 2: Art/Research Continuum by E. Palmiter (2011, p. 19)

In direct reference to Palmiter's Art/Research Continuum (2011), the participants of my study entered their student teaching semester with considerable experience in artistic research. They engaged in artistic inquiry (far left in orange) in their required studio courses as part of the university's graduation requirements. They also experienced arts-infused research (far right in maroon) by engaging in artistic activities and developing their artistic perceptions, as well as by planning and executing art lessons for short-term teaching experiences during preservice courses (Cheng, Chow, & Cheng, 2014). Having personally experienced both extremes of Palmiter's Art/Research Continuum in their teacher education program, it seemed that arts-based research (center and right in light blue) was a midway point between the participants' prior experience. If these university students were thoroughly involved in studio art classes, and then followed in their educational program to adopt the role of arts-based researcher while student teaching, then they would be less likely to experience a gap of identity.



This thinking created one additional focus of my thesis study: to devise a university class setting that took my participants' existing artistic and research experiences and apply them to the participants' student teaching experiences. Many of my considerations, when formulating this course, stemmed from examining arts-based education research.

### **Arts-based Education Research**

Existing notions of current research were debunked by McGee's (1973) declaration, "the scientist and the artist, far from being engaged in opposed or incompatible activity, are both trying to extend our knowledge and experience by the use of creative imagination subjected to critical control" (p. 68). Understanding research as both legitimate and beneficial to the field of art education was also paramount to the success of any study in the art education field. Cahnmann-Taylor (2008) argues that arts-based education research can be "art for scholarship's sake" (p. 1). Admittedly, arts-based education research can be a very structured method of inquiry. However, while much qualitative research relies heavily on words, arts-based research can extend beyond linguistic limitations and allow for expression and analysis (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008). Mottram (2009) in "Asking Questions of Art: Higher Education, Research, and Creative Practice" aligns with one purpose of my study by stating, "Instead of constraining ourselves to only using creative practices as a means to investigate our field, it is suggested that we open our perspective up to accommodate research practices,...or philosophical practices as a means to understand or add knowledge to the field of creative

practice” (pp. 229-230). Though she was referring to higher educational research, this can also be applied to the research done by undergraduate education students.

Barone and Eisner (2012) state that, “the researcher must exhibit artistry in whatever form of art or form he or she chooses to engage” (p. 61). Such an open interpretation of research allows for the participants of my study to engage in arts-based research where and how they feel most comfortable. The participants of this study, as arts-based researchers, were provided room to grow and develop in and through their research artistically. Offering written pieces, art-making experiences, and conversational prompts provided my participants room to select a preferred format for each reflection.

Avoiding factors and limitations that might hamper creativity often become just as important as creating opportunity for reflection (Zimmerman, 2009). My study was essentially created when I opened wide the requirements for assignments, created supportive environments, and informed the participants of their role as researchers. The next step was devising and presenting a multi-assignment approach to research to the participants. I laid out the research formats of art-making and blogging onto a communal website, [exartedex.wordpress.com](http://exartedex.wordpress.com). To further aid the process and legitimize the research of each participant, I scheduled in-class discussions to provide a time for participants a space to verbally express and process the student teaching experience.

### **Communal Blogging**

A blog is a regularly updated website run by an individual or a small group, characterized by its conversational or informal tone (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). Short for “weblog,” the blog is a relatively well-established format for online social

communications. Newer online formats, including Facebook, Twitter, Edmodo, and Wikis have all staked a claim in the world of education in dissemination of information, assignment completion, assessment, and interaction. As the *Creative Bloq* article “A History of Blogging” (2014) recounts:

In 1994, the world witnessed the birth of what many agree to be the very first blog. It was called Links.net—a place where creator Justin Hall could share his musings and, well, his favourite links, with the world. It was just a simple page with manually updated HTML (and it still is), but it changed the course of how we share ideas and content on the web. A few years later, in 1997, as more and more users began using personal websites as a place to spotlight their ideas, the term “weblog” was coined—and then shortened to “blog” in 1999. (para 7-8)

Blogs differ from most websites in that content is displayed in reverse-chronological order (the most recent posts appearing first in the feed of the website) and the general tendency for posts is to be personal and opinionated in nature. Since 2003, blogs have generally included text, images, other sources of media, and links to other sites and blogs (“A History of Blogging”, 2014).

Bloggging can be an educationally lucrative endeavor for the professor-student relationship while learning and reflecting during the student teaching semester. Bloggging adds a dimension for the professor to gauge his or her students’ progress, capacity for reflection, and willingness to openly participate in class, and in turn, chosen career.

Farwell and Krüger-Ross (2013) explain the use of blogs as an assessment tool:

[Blogs] can serve as a forum outside the classroom while giving educators another outlet to assess engagement with topics and evaluate student learning. While it may seem odd to discuss bloggging in terms of assessment due to their link to journaling, blogs may present a more up-to-date and meaningful method to encourage students to write class reflections and develop viewpoints stemming from class discussion. Depending on the topics covered, blogs may alert educators

to potential problems that students may not mention in class or that the students may not be able to identify themselves. (pp. 207-208)

The parameters of this aspect of my study fell more along the lines of what Farwell and Krüger-Ross (2013) describe further:

A more involved way to evaluate individual student learning through blogs is to examine the recurring themes throughout the semester. While this can be done using other methods, such as periodic, anonymous course evaluations, face-to-face meetings and other methods, the consistent and repetitive schedule of blog posting makes feedback more available to educators on a post-by-post basis. In this way, blogs may provide educators with resources to evaluate learning and course progress in a timelier manner. (p. 218)

Ulbricht (2011) agrees, urging that writing-driven blog assignments help preservice teachers reflect and focus on the many facets and considerations of art education within an educational setting. Cheung and Kung (2006) also related technology driven reflection as such: “When a student is engaged in a compositional process, creating and manipulating ideas through interaction with the technological environment, and developing ideas until achieving a final product, he or she is actually going through a reflective process” (p. 107). I formatted the blog for my study, [www.exartedex.blogspot.com](http://www.exartedex.blogspot.com) (an abbreviation of “experiences in art education expressed”) to be both collaborative between participants and secured with the highest privacy settings. I aimed for the study to capture the strengths and challenges witnessed by these emerging professionals. Communal blogging can be a reflective, insightful, and deeply engaging experience for the student teachers, documenting their growth into the role of educator. As one of the data collection tools to observe the participants’ arts-based research, the communal blog captured data in visual, animated, and written formats.

## **Shared Art-Making Amongst Participants**

Art-making is a natural path to reflection for individuals trained in studio courses. Drawing from the personal to produce ideas visually, making something outside of oneself, is a regular activity in studio art classes. As the participants of my study have completed studio, writing, dialogue, and reflective assignments throughout their time at their university, the creation of art through and with reflection is an easy coupling. Making a connection between art-making and identity, Unrath and Kerridge (2009) state: “In the area of art-making, self-discovery is often connected to making creative decisions about the content, form, and material of your craft” (p. 276).

McNiff (2013) describes the communal nature of art-making in arts-based research in an environment where the participants “can be invited as co-researchers to participate in similar artistic inquiry to investigate the same research question. Each can share their learning and experiences, identifying similarities and differences” (p. 205). Art-making as research, accompanied by writing, leads the researcher to discern personal issues from larger aspects that are conveyed in their art (McNiff, 2013). Interaction with other researchers facilitates a balance between thought and action, which makes for more reflective practices (Argyris & Schön, 1978). By creating, and then sharing and discussing their creations during seminar classes with a common group of researchers (classmates), the participants of my study were able to consider the opinions and interpretations of others in a similar situation (student teaching). One focus of my study was of shared experience and camaraderie among the arts-based researchers. Sharing their artworks, through reflection on their student teaching, created an opportunity

beyond *unpacking the week* for these participants to exchange ideas and describe their experiences.

## **THE THREE MODELS OF UNDERSTANDING/ ART-MAKING**

### **Discovering a Framework**

Eisner (1998) describes the path toward analysis well in *The Enlightened Eye: Qualitative Inquiry and the Enhancement of Educational Practice*. He states, “with an emergent focus...significance is determined by selecting out of the interactions those that count, given the frame of reference, theory, conceptual system, or set of values the observer brings to the scene” (pp. 188-189). For analysis of the triptychs and blog posts, I needed a frame of reference to help me not only analyze the creations, but also uncover connections made between the participants and their journey as student teachers. I offered the participants an additional opportunity to analyze and reflect on the works during our final interview. After collecting interview data, the next step was assessing the depth of reflection that each participant had accomplished through the creation, explanation, and other relevant considerations (i.e. classroom management) given to their triptychsthrough their various modes of reflection.

### **A Shift in Paradigms to Include Art-Making Models**

Pearse (1983) explores a research paradigm established “as orientations or forms of knowing” (p. 159). Pearse does not claim the paradigm for his own, and cites philosophers and researchers as distant as Nietzsche, Aoki, and Habermas (all indirectly) with portions or versions of the paradigm. The paradigms position as follows:

Paradigm I: The Empirical-Analytic Orientation (Technical Knowing)  
Paradigm II: The Interpretive-Hermeneutic Orientation (Situational Knowing)  
Paradigm III: The Critical-Theoretic Orientation (Critical Knowing) (Pearse, 1983, p. 159)

These paradigms represent unique interests, mindsets, and agendas for understanding and interacting with the world around oneself.

In the book: *Arts Based Research*, Rolling (2013) acknowledges that arts-based researchers “negotiate bodies of knowledge in a complex world where human beings build theories and life practices enacted along a full spectrum that includes both scientific *and* artistic systems for comprehending the human experience” (Rolling, 2013, p. 9). He also distills Pearse’s (1983) “paradigm for considering paradigms” of research and reflective thought into wording that is applicable for art-making systems. In this, he overlaid the concepts of understanding into art-making, based from understanding as a cognitive function of art-making.

The three orientations within the Knowing/Art-Making Models served as my checkpoints for analyzing and assessing levels of contemplation and connection made by the participants of this study. In Chapter 5, these three models will inform my sorting of the data collected in the participants’ blog post and exit interviews.

### **The Empirical-Analytic Orientation (Technical Knowing)**

The Technical Knowing Model insists that art is a system of production, with mastery of technique and form as the goal. The researcher and the world are seen as entirely separate and unrelated, and effectiveness is actively sought. Isolated efforts, measurable improvements or achievements, and clear “means to an end” motivations and

goals are observed in this paradigm. Predictability, control, and efficiency are explored and discovered, in order to draw the research to a clear and tidy conclusion. For an art educator, this may be as uncomplicated as examining the most productive method to teach one's students in two point perspective drawing techniques. For an art education preservice teacher, technical knowing might take shape in a reflection upon discipline models, and which ones seem to keep class disruption to a minimum.

### **The Interpretive-Hermeneutic Orientation (Situational Knowing)**

The Situational Knowing Model relies on communication. In this paradigm of knowing, phenomenological understanding is the aim. Interpretive-Hermeneutic Orientation "searches for the deep structure of human events and actions to discover the rules or modes that give them order " (Pearse, 1983, p. 160). One important note to consider is that although the research is intersubjective with all foreseeable, and even unrealized, factors, this level of understanding is not the same understanding as empathy. Situational knowing does not involve projecting one's own perspective and consciousness to another person or situation in order to gain perspective, but rather acknowledges others and their other ways of experiencing and knowing in the world. In this paradigm, there is a high degree of interaction and participation for the researcher, in order to conceive of the social world involving and surrounding the researcher. When seen in an art educator, this model might take form as an engagement with students in a deeper and more meaningful level than Situational Knowing, relating the teacher's educational motives and the full-class explorations that could take place during art class, as well as opportunities to be discovered outside of class or standard curriculum. For an



art education student teacher, engagement with the students they serve, as well as taking note of the differences of those exchanges among the different developmental stages of the students they teach, would be a good example of situational knowing.

### **The Critical-Theoretic Orientation (Critical Knowing)**

The Critical Knowing Model rests its work in reflection. “The valued man-world relationship is man-in-his-world, with his world. It is a relationship in which a person reflects on his or her world and acts in order to transform” (Pearse, 1983, p. 160). At its most basic, this paradigm of knowledge rests in reflection and action in partnership with one another. The researcher does not merely observe the separate-from-self world, or communicate as a part of the world, but observes, communicates, and alters and liberates thoughts to transform that which is found needing of change. To triumph in such social settings as classrooms or school environments, to possibly improve the reality of a marginalized or disenfranchised population as an educator from within, is the dream and lifelong ambition of many idealistic and socially compelled educators.

Specifically during the emerging stage as a student teacher, the educational models and schema he or she once discussed and practiced move away from the ideal, conceptual, and immaterial. The student teachers make use of their models and schema into the real, physical, imperfect, and challenging authenticity of students and schools engulfed with measures, standards, hidden curriculum, and imposed procedures and goals. How are preservice teachers to gauge their growth and affect throughout their career, if not from an entirely external measures? For the participants of my research study, the idea of relativist activity and change may come too late by occurring alongside

the pressure of the *real* classrooms for the first time. Nevertheless, I did hope that the notion of critical knowing would be recognized, and maybe even adopted, at some point in their careers.

## **CONCLUSION**

As an untraditional Literature Review Chapter, this chapter explored what new and significant realities and realizations student teachers are likely to experience in this particular moment in their professional careers. Literary connections and contexts were offered into the creative and reflective work the student teachers performed within the arts-based research methodology were explored. The theories and concepts affecting the participants are evident. Notions of professional identity development, creative pedagogy, and the concept of the art teachers as reflective practitioners were explained for the purposes of this research study. An engagement beyond survival strategies was intended, in my study, to benefit the artist, the teacher, the reflective practitioner, and the professional educator, all as one person in one career.

The concepts of the reflective practitioner in the classroom were highlighted as the observational goal of this study. Pearse's (1983) and Rolling's (2013) Three Models of Understanding/Art-Making were illustrated as the framework to this study.

Chapter Three will discuss the research methodology I employed while observing the participants and collecting data from their art-making and blog posts. Explanations of definitions and aspects that are specific to the grounded theory methodology will be made

clear. I will describe and explain adaptations and revisions to the study over the course of the Fall 2014 semester.

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explains, in detail, the research methodology employed to observe the study's participants, grounded theory. Language specific to grounded theory: the categories, connections, and evidences, are also clarified. As I analyzed four separate categories of data, I also needed to describe each category fully with the inclusion of assignment specifics and methods of analysis for each. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the grounded theory research method and how I employed it in the context of this study. In order to research the study participants, their interactions, their assignments, and developments over a semester, several aspects of this research changed and adapted. This chapter explains my original intent, adaptations to the study, and the realizations throughout this research timeline, which I continually analyzed.

### **GROUNDING THEORY METHODOLOGY**

Within grounded theory methodology, the focus of the study is not clearly formulated at the start of the research. Grounded theory is a specific qualitative research method initiated by sociologists Glaser and Strauss in 1967 (Merriam, 1998). In this style of research, I observed and assessed situations in which individuals interact, act, or engage in specific processes in response to a phenomenon. The result of this research is a theory that is *grounded* in the data collected. Further separating it from other forms of qualitative research is the fact that the theory developed is typically *substantive* rather than formal. Merriam (1998) explains, "substantive theory has as its referent specific,

everyday world situations such as an innovative middle school science program....A substantial theory has a specificity and hence usefulness to practice often lacking in theories that cover more global concerns" (pp. 17 – 18). A researcher collects multiple modes of data, repeatedly hypothesizes, and in the end offers propositions and theories. Strauss and Corbin (1994) state, "the major difference between this methodology and other approaches to qualitative research is its emphasis upon the theory development" (p. 274).

In most qualitative research methodologies, different forms of data collected are called sources of evidence (Yin, 2003). However, in grounded theory, these are called categories. Scott (2004) explains:

Grounded theory research...is a qualitative tradition built on compared concepts. Proponents of the constant comparative method suggest that similar data are grouped and conceptually labeled. Then concepts are categorized. Categories are linked and organized by relationship, conditions and dimensions are developed, and finally a theory emerges. (p. 113)

Within grounded theory each category represents one unit of information. Categories are the contextual elements of a theory. Particular challenges for researchers in grounded theory are: to set aside pre-existing theoretical ideas and to avoid forcing established theory to current research. The researcher must also formulate specific steps in classifying their data. Finally, as this qualitative research evolves throughout the course of the study, the researcher must maintain specific conditions, strategies, and contexts throughout the research timeline. As the grounded theory researcher, I not only observed data within these categories, but also analyzed it as well. It is important to note that analysis begins as data is collected, and continues throughout the research time period.

In that grounded theory research analysis is continual, much information is inductively accumulated, rather than deductively obtained. The methods of analysis are equally important to the research as the obtaining of information. As Merriam (1998) states, “since the theory is grounded in the data and emerges from them, the methodology is called grounded theory” (p. 190).

The standard format for data analysis within grounded theory research begins with open coding, in which “the researcher forms initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied by segmenting information” (Creswell, 1998, p. 57). Next is axial coding, in which the researcher assembles the data in new arrangements, identifying content conditions and consequences of the study. Typical to grounded theory is selective coding, in which the researcher identifies storylines that integrate the multiple categories observed and analyzed, in order to develop hypotheses. Creswell (2007) explains:

The result of this process of data collection and analysis is a theory, a substantial level theory, written by the researchers close to a specific problem or population of people. This theory is subjected to further empirical testing because now we know the variables or categories from field-based data, although the study may end at this point because the generation of a theory is a legitimate outcome of the study. (pp. 57-58)

#### **INTRODUCTION TO THE METHODOLOGY: LEARNING AS ONE GOES**

As speculation is the starting point to the development of theories in a qualitative study, it is only natural for the researcher to consider the possibilities for change, found in what already exists. For this particular research, the inspiration came from my own previous experience as a preservice teacher who transitioned to a teacher. I personally

dealt with the separation from the subject I taught, visual art, to anything that I actually created with my own two hands. This led me to consider the possibilities of where I could marry the two concepts of teaching and making.

### **Creating Categories Within Grounded Theory Research**

My grounded theory study began with fairly well established categories. They were based on my personal experience as a preservice teacher, my knowledge of the current student teaching semester course at the university where the study took place, and predictions of the student teachers from this university program. To conduct this particular research, the instructor allowed me to devise a new course calendar, as well as create and update assignments. I also used the pre-existing blog format from the previous semester's course, but updated the format for easier viewing, and increased the privacy settings. With these efforts, my four categories came to be: triptych-portion assignments, blog posts, in-class observations, and end of semester interviews.

Through these four categories, my sources of evidence were: physical artifacts (triptych-portion creations), documentation (blog posts), participant observations (audio from in-class sessions), and interviews (at the end of the semester). I describe the contexts of each category here individually, though for the most part they occurred simultaneously. Similarly, I also photographed all creations for physical artifacts, and documented on the blog. Both of these evidences are mentioned several times in description of the other. It is important to note that, specifically within this methodology, the collection of observations (in-class sessions) and documents (blog posts) are atypical

categories. I chose to use these two categories, as well as the more traditional grounded theory categories of interviews and online interaction, for this study in order to gain the most data from an optimum number of sources.

### **Category One: Physical Artifacts in Triptych Creations**

Preservice teachers conducting arts-based research is a well-explored topic in higher education research (Barone & Eisner, 2011; Diamond, 1940; Manovski, 2014; Schenstead, 2012; Weber, 2014). I was particularly interested in observing the various stages of development and self-image the participants would discover over the course of the semester. A multi-stage, possibly chronological format seemed the best fit for my research. When devising this arts-based research aspect of the course, Dr. Lilith suggested the use of triptychs. This idea evolved from her extensive experience in preservice teacher education, where she has observed three very specific points of development—from the student, to the student teacher, to the teacher—over the course of their final semester in college.

As Sullivan (2006) justifies, "The argument of arts-based researchers is that the arts provide a special way of coming to understand something...there is a need to be able to incorporate the arts as forms that more adequately represent the breadth of human knowing" (p. 24). In spite of efforts to offer clear descriptions of arts-based research amid complex educational circumstances, arts-based research can be easily limited and relegated to trivial research. Knowledge construction within self-study, collaborations, and subjectivity might reveal important insights that might otherwise be missed (Fox & Geichman, 2001; Sullivan, 2006).



Creswell (2014) considers the four worldviews of researchers: postpositivism, constructivism, transformativism, and pragmatism. By providing discovery-based reflective experiences for the participants of this study, the constructivist worldview was applied:

Social constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences – meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas. The goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' view of the situation being studied. (p. 8)

It proved beneficial for my study to frame the participants' reflection topics to align with social constructivist views. As preservice teachers, they were in a unique position to recognize their own backgrounds, biases, cultural and personal experiences, all while making sense of their place in the school community. The participants were asked to reflect upon their engagement with one another, cooperating teachers, students, the professor and teaching assistant, and any other circumstances that framed their life setting. They also were encouraged to create art in reflection and in response to those engagements.

I hypothesized that rigorous reflection of time, space, and setting might help preservice teachers avoid falling into a *survival mode* (Hume, 2014). I further hypothesized that arts-based research might be a familiar means to process and reflect upon, particularly for these participants. This was because they had completed several studio courses in pursuit of their art education undergraduate degree.

In order to frame, yet not constrain, the artworks and reflections for each of these three triptych pieces, Dr. Lilith and I placed no requirements on the materials, time spent, or format the participants might choose. Instead, very specific topics were suggested for each of the three pieces (see Table 4).

### **Category Two: Documentation in Blog Posts**

Blogs have been well-researched (Moloney, 2010) as a format for reflection within the context of teacher preparation courses. In comparison with other formats and configurations for public idea sharing on the Internet, blogs typically have few rules and limitations over content. Therefore, they feature a congenial and sometimes amateur feel to the authors' writing, substance, and topic choices. A blog was an ideal and familiar platform to invite preservice teachers to share their experiences in the art classroom.

As Merriam (1999) states, "on-line data collection offers an electronic extension of familiar research techniques, widening the scope of data available to the researcher" (p. 128). As the previous semester's art education student teaching course had incorporated a blog for communication between classmates, this assignment was already established for the university course. With only one 2-hour class session per week in which an on-line forum provided for interaction and frequent engagement between participants, as well as the opportunity for more in-depth coverage of chosen topics. An inherent discrepancy occurs between the on-line self and the real-life self, no matter how one attempts to "be themselves" on-line (Merriam, 1999), so the parameters of the interaction of the blog were clearly stated in the first class session. While professionalism

was not a requirement, the instructor explained that the teaching assistant, the professor, and myself would observe all interactions on the blog. She also clarified that this format would serve as data for my research, and would be used in grading for the course itself. Over the course of the semester, Dr. Lilith and I designed five assignments for the blog (see Table 4), and regularly invited students to submit digital check-ins on their art creations, questions, and any additional entries they might want to share with the group. We assigned the blog posts to occur throughout the class schedule, graduation requirements, and other assignments. We also asked preservice teachers to comment on one another's blog posts, when they had commentary to offer. There was no required number of posts students should make onto their classmates' blogs.

A consideration that Dr. Lilith (the professor of the course), Mary (the teaching assistant), and I (the researcher-observer) took into account when reading the blog entries was what Rolfe (2006) describes as the challenges for maintaining journals, and that there is "a requirement for time and intellectual 'space' to write the journal. This can be particularly difficult to achieve...where the demands on time are onerous and require skillful management in order to meet the many diverse challenges" (p. 96). For this reason, we rarely initiated discussions about online submissions in person, and allowed the blog to be an intellectual and expressive space for the participants.

### **Category Three: Observation by Peripheral Membership**

As Merriam (1998) acknowledges, "participation in the group is definitely secondary to the role of information gatherer... the level of information revealed is

controlled by the group members being investigated” (Merriam, 1998, p. 101). Adler and Adler (1994) describe personally controlled participation as "peripheral membership" in which researchers "observe and interact closely enough with members to establish an insider's identity without participating in those activities constituting the core of the group membership” (p. 380). By interacting with, but not necessarily informing or persuading, the participants of this study I conducted peripheral membership. This allowed for optimum observations and data on my participants’ experiences over the course of the semester.

In order to gain the most insight on the participants and their development as student teachers, it was clear that I needed to observe their in-class sessions regularly. Within the various levels of participation as an observer in the class, I eventually decided to practice peripheral membership as a participant observer. There are several strengths of the role of participant observer: events are covered in real time, the evidence is contextualized, and insight into participants’ behaviors and motives are clear to all involved. Weaknesses of participant observations are that it can be time-consuming, it requires reflexivity by the researcher to adjust their observations, and it is susceptible to possible researcher bias. These were necessary challenges when conducting grounded theory research, making both the observer role and selected methodology work for each other (Yin, 2003).

In-class observations proved to be a convenient category of data collection, as the course requirements included weekly class periods. Making a conscious effort to remain silent during the discussion of the blog entries and reflections on arts-based research

would keep my participation at a minimum, while contributing to the conversational tone and comfort level of the participants. Throughout the timeline of this research, I monitored the level of my participation.

#### **Category Four: Semi-Structured Interviews**

When justifying interviews as a data collection tool, Seidman (2006) explains "at the very heart of what it means to be human is the ability of people to symbolize their experience through language" (p. 8). Though it is impossible to understand another person completely, the sharing of understandings and meanings from experiences with the use of language, between two or more people, is a basic and natural mode of inquiry. Wengraf (2001) addresses one particular method of shared understanding, "the 'semi-structured depth' interview normally involves the interviewer in a process of both model-building and model-testing, both theory construction and theory verification, within the same session or series of sessions" (p. 4). He goes on:

Semi-structured interviews are designed to have a number of interview questions prepared in advance that such prepared questions are designed to be sufficiently open that the subsequent questions of interviewer cannot be planned in advance but must be improvised in a careful and theorized way....Where the interviewee is asked to tell a story, produce a narrative of some sort regarding all or part of their own life experience. These biographic-narrative interviews are of considerable interest in their own right, and they also illustrate rather well more general principles of semi-structured interviewing. (Wengraf, 2001, p. 5)

Wengraf further asserts that while the semi-structured format is often regarded to be the easiest method of interview, this is mistakenly assumed. In comparison with other methods, such in-depth interaction and responsive conversational technique requires preparation before, creativity during, and considerably more analysis after this format of

interview. For the specific purposes of my interviews, I wrote open-ended questions for the participants to respond to (see Appendix A), and used follow-up questions when appropriate.

As Mishler (1986) explains "those questions and responses are formulated in, developed through, and shaped by the discourse between interviewers and respondents" (p. 66). Just as the interviewer may enter the discourse with an established set of questions, the interviewee may enter the discourse with an agenda of their own. Mishler (1986) also states, "responses are not simply answers to questions but also a reflection of the interviewers assessment of whether a respondent has said 'enough' for the purpose at hand" (p. 55).

Even with collections and analyses of multiple sources of data, much of what cannot be interpreted correctly through observation could be understood by simply asking. It was clear early on that I would need to interview the participants of my study. As Stake (1995) states, "Formulating the question and anticipating probes that evoke good responses is a special art. Qualitative interviews parallel quantitative observations: they seek to aggregate perceptions or knowledge over multiple respondents" (p. 65). Booth, Colomb, and Williams (2008) claim that people can be used as primary sources. I part ways, however, with their statement that "the more you plan by determining *exactly* what you want to know, the more effectively you will get what you need" (p. 82), as this suggests a desire for specific answers. I prefer to see where the data takes me, and for these reasons, formatted my interview questions as semi-structured and informal (Campbell, et al., 2011).

I designed and completed the participant interview category (method of data collection) last. The interview format served as the participants' cumulative account of their arts-based research experiences over the course of the semester. Individual interviews with all four participants, as well as the teaching assistant and professor, were conducted shortly after the final class, depending on individual schedules. The length of the interviews ranged from thirty minutes to just over an hour. Interviews covered personal background, future ambitions, feedback from class sessions, topics covered in class and on the blog, reflections about the student teaching experience, and creating and sharing personal artwork as a class requirement (see Appendix A).

#### **WHAT (LITTLE) WAS ESTABLISHED FROM THE START OF THE STUDY**

One consideration of this particular research study, involving many factors that are formative, reflexive, and developing over the course of the semester, is that there were also several absolute and highly specified parameters. My participants, sampling strategy, observation timeline, and location were predetermined because of the students enrolled in the course for the Fall 2014 semester. The fixed variables of my research were ideal from the start. Otherwise, I might have run the risk of extending the study too long, or collecting far too much data.

#### **Pseudonyms**

Ogden (2008) defines and advocates for pseudonyms by stating: "Pseudonyms are very useful for research in sensitive topics, particularly...when pseudonyms are used, it is important that this be clearly identified in any dissemination of findings" (p. 42). A

pseudonym was necessary for each participant, as the Institutional Review Board (IRB) demanded the confidentiality and the anonymity of the individuals in the study as a point of ethics. As colleagues and classmates could have easily identified the specific comments or creations of my participants, it was necessary in all cases to generate fictitious names, and in some cases slightly reword reflections and dialogues. When assigning the names to be used as pseudonyms, great care and consideration was taken to any possible associations or character assumptions that could be made based on fictitious names. I offered all participants the opportunity to choose their own pseudonym, and all except one declined. One student chose his previously used pseudonym, “Ruben” for this study. For the remaining three students, as well as the TA and the professor, I selected the pseudonyms. There was a narrative nature of the coursework being completed by the participants, the research being conducted by myself, and interactions that the course and course assignments naturally fostered. It was therefore important for the participants to recognize themselves in the telling of their story, and maintaining that the outside reader could not identify anyone (Ogden, 2008). This was necessary to protect the preservice teachers from any potential embarrassment or negative feedback from others who might read this study.

### **Participants and Sampling**

The participants for this research study consisted of the four students within the undergraduate program in the same art education department. All three undergraduate participants had completed every university requirement in order to graduate, except their



student teaching experience in the field and the weekly class. While in other situations this might be considered a typical sample, given the breadth of age, experience, career path, future ambitions, gender, household situations, and educational background found within these four participants, the term "unique sample" seems more fitting. As Merriam (1998) explains, " a unique sample is based on unique, atypical, perhaps real attributes where occurrences of the phenomenon of interest exist. You would be interested in them because they are unique or atypical" (p. 62).

Truly, this small sample group produced great diversity, and was comprised of an unusually small graduating class from this particular department. Drawing from the entire Fall 2014 roster, participants ranged in age from 22 to 35, with two males and two females. Three were undergraduate students, and one was a graduate student. Two students were considered "non-traditional" and were returning to college after other careers. Two participants have partners and children. Each of these participants, as well as the professor and TA, will be described more fully in Chapter Four, with the use of biographical vignettes.

### **Locations of Research**

The locations for this research lie within physical and cyber locations. Classes were held on the university campus in the art building on most Monday evenings from 6 to 8 p.m. Students submitted blog posts to: [www.exartedex.wordpress.com](http://www.exartedex.wordpress.com), which was a multi-contributor blog for art education student teachers within this class. The specifics of each class period are described in Chapter Four.

## **Timeline of Study**

As with many other factors in a grounded theory research project, the timeline of this study as a whole remained flexible, and followed several different schedules. Within other qualitative research styles, there are often separate research timelines, observation timelines, and an analysis timelines. For this particular research, many of these segments overlapped. My initial data collection on the arts-based research methodology the students would use as well as the reflective art-making and other factors of the art education student teaching semester, began during the semester previous to my observation timeline, in the form of a literature review. As I had been granted permission by the Art Education Department to adapt the curriculum for the student teaching course, I created the categories for this study during Summer 2014. The 15-week, Fall 2014 semester was my entire observation timeline. I conducted end-of-semester interviews after classes ended, from December 2014 to February 2015. Some data, mainly the in-class observations, were analyzed continually during the Fall semester as well. During the winter break of 2014 – 2015, I further analyzed all completed categories of my research, particularly the arts-based research triptych projects, and commentaries from the class blog. During Spring 2015, I finalized my analyses of each category, with hypotheses and connections clarified and verified by Mary and Dr. Lilith. The most important factor of this timeline is the fact that analysis occurred continually throughout the observation period, as opposed to taking place entirely in retrospect of the observation.

## **EVOLUTION OF THE TIMELINE**

Regarding the ever-evolving nature of grounded theory research, Denzin and Lincoln (1998) point out, "the more one investigates, the more layers of this setting one discovers" (p. 186). This suggests the possibility, and even need, to make adjustments over time. Beyond establishing a coursework timeline the categories for participant research and engagement, the decision to frame the participants' arts-based research products as triptych-portions, and the intention to collect information regarding the participants' student teaching experiences continually over the course of the semester, little else to my research was formulated prior to the student teaching semester.

Within the grounded theory methodology, there are two additional elements: properties and hypotheses. Properties describe and give dimensions to the categories. It was important for each category to have some different properties, so that no two were entirely the same. For example, the properties of the blog posts were: online, relatively private, varied in subject, and individually written. Triptychs were made privately and individually, varied in subject and materials, but discussed in class sessions.

Hypotheses are the links between categories and properties. This means that hypotheses formulate alongside the collection and analysis of the data within the categories (Merriam, 1998). An example of one developing hypothesis during observation is my shift in focus from blog posts to in-class observations. While analyzing the first in-class session conversations of the semester, I noticed that the participants were discussing the same topics they shared in their blog posts. The largest difference between the blogs and the conversations were the responses and suggestions from fellow

participants in class. This type of interaction was non-existent on the blog posts. I hypothesized that there was less interaction on the blogs than in person because there were only four students in the class, and that deeper reflection would occur in-person among participants. During in-class sessions, there was time for everyone to discuss problems or experiences, therefore I decided to attend, record, and transcribe every in-class session to capture more relevant data. This hypothesis proved to be beneficial to the study, and the collected data will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

Merriam (1998) discusses emerging hypotheses from the refinement of properties. After acknowledging modifications, hypotheses are necessary to clarify the logic of a study, and remove irrelevant factors. My initial heavy focus toward the blog posts would ultimately prove irrelevant, as there was little original data shared in that category. I advised Dr. Lilith to emphasize the blog posts less than I had previously intended. By shifting the scope of research, as the research was conducted, elements of the category could be integrated into other categories and analyzed; the theory became more logical and more refined. By the same respect, data from categories, properties, and hypotheses that appear to be strong or possibly dwindle in frequency over the entirety of the research timeline must still be retained until analysis is complete. The management of such a large amount of data is necessary in grounded theory research to guarantee that any facet of data that might prove to be relevant to other developing categories, properties, or hypotheses is accessible. The research consistently shifts between inductive and deductive discovery, and emphases can change. In this process, continual data analysis is present. Merriam (1998) explains:

When categories and their properties are reduced and refined and then linked together by tentative hypotheses, the analysis is moving toward the development of the theory to explain the data's meaning. This third level of analysis transcends the formation of categories, for theory seeks to explain a large number of phenomena and tell how they are related. (p. 192)

#### **CONTENT ANALYSIS AND ANALYTIC INDUCTION OF THE EVIDENCE**

Grounded theory research requires the researcher to look into a study as it progresses constantly, so that the researcher can shift hypotheses and alter the study when needed. For me, this simultaneous data collection and analysis proved to be repetitive and occasionally overwhelming. Bogdan and Biklen's (1992) ten suggestions to successful simultaneous data collection proved an invaluable framework to this study. Simplified, they are:

1. Make decisions that narrow your study
2. Make decisions based on the study you want
3. Develop analytic questions
4. Plan data collection sessions
5. Rate observer comments as you go
6. Maintain memos
7. Test ideas and themes
8. Explore literature while you are in the field
9. Consider metaphors and concepts
10. Use visual devices (pp. 155-164)

Many of these suggestions were established in the formative stages of my research, such as built-in data collection sessions based on the university's course schedule. I also explored an equal or larger amount of literature during the observation time of my study as I did when creating my initial review of literature. It is typical for data collection and analysis to inform the literature review of a grounded theory study. Specifically, my

literature review evolved to include aspects of hidden curriculum, reflection, reflexivity, and reflective practices in the classroom.

Content analysis proved to be the largest challenge of my research. As Thurber (2004) states, "content analysis focuses on research directed at any recorded documentation within a specified context that is deemed to be authentic and valid" (p. 500). In my choice to collect four categories of data, and to conduct a grounded theory research methodology, content analysis morphed from what I expected to be a straight line of development to a constant back and forth. For example, when a discussion topic for the course was not covered according to the schedule, I had to adjust the wording of a blog post prompt in order to glean the participants' opinion on a specific facet of their student teaching experience. As Thurber (2004) explains, "The intent is to identify trends, emergent themes, possible conceptual frameworks, or series as a result of analysis" (p. 500). The participants of the study individually introduced, reframed, and laid to rest multiple trends throughout their student teaching and arts-based research experiences. Because of this, multiple themes came into, and then out of the data being collected. As Stake (1995) states, "there is no particular moment when data analysis begins. Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as two final compilations. Analysis essentially means taking something apart. We take our impressions, our observations, apart" (p. 71).

It was clear from the first time I sat down to organize the initial data I collected from the blog posts and in class discussions that data analysis strategies can range greatly in qualitative research. Fortunately for this research, and the grounded theory

methodology, there is to some extent a limitation to the techniques available. In searching for recurring themes and patterns, the analysis of my research data approaches what Manning and Cullum-Swan (1994) describe as "a quantitatively oriented technique by which standardized measurements are applied to metrically define units and these are used to characterize and compare documents" (p. 464). I analyzed the blog submissions, interviews, and the triptych component artifacts within a separate standardized model, which I will discuss below.

### **Content Analysis: Triptychs, Blog Posts, and Interviews**

As described in Chapter Two, Pearse's (1983) and Rolling's (2013) Models of Understanding/Art-Making were used to analyze all content from each of the categories.

As a recap, the models were:

Model I: The Empirical-Analytic Orientation (Technical Knowing)

Model II: The Interpretive-Hermeneutic Orientation (Situational Knowing)

Model III: The Critical-Theoretic Orientation (Critical Knowing)

(Pearse, 1983, p. 159)

Technical Knowing involves the mastery of a skill or technique. Situational Knowing is similar to empathy, though the drive is less to place one's own perspectives into another's experiences, but rather to interact and participate with others to gain deeper understanding. Critical Knowing takes the mastery of techniques and the interaction with others to a reflective plane. To achieve Critical Knowing means to view one's self as a participant, capable of change and improvement. The participants' commentary on their triptych artworks, blog posts, and interviews were analyzed, each as they corresponded with the three models described above.

## **Analytic Induction: In-Class Observations**

When describing the management, analysis, and interpretation of data as one process, Denzin and Lincoln (1998) discuss analytic induction. In the description of the researcher's work in this framework, it is described as *with – from between – case analysis* that emphasize the connections between theory, concepts, and empirical indicators. In using a grounded theory approach, I paid attention to the variables and links between those variables, while maintaining focus on the primary question. Denzin & Lincoln (1998) explain that a grounded theory researcher's model "argues for rigor in the collection, production, analysis, and presentation of qualitative inquiry materials. They use analytic induction and grounded theory, and they believe in studies that can be replicated and judged against the canons of good science" (p. 40). The research model described here is reflective, with data collected and analyzed throughout the study.

Interpreting data in qualitative research should follow specific protocols to remain somewhat structured, so that it can someday end. In considering the application of certain data categories, such as observation and semi-structured interviews, a clear approach for analysis is key. Creswell (2014) states that qualitative research must have an emergent design:

The initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and some of all phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data....The key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and to address the research to obtain that information. (p. 186)

Creswell also suggests that connecting independent and dependent variables show what is related, and provide grounded theory properties between two or more groups. For the



four categories of this study, any connections to one another, beyond the fact that they involved the same participants for the same course during the same semester, were unclear from the beginning. For that reason analytic induction served a critical role, and allowed me to find comparisons and relations beyond the participants' shared experiences. The in-class observations conducted during this study provided the connections between the other three categories—the triptychs, blog posts, and interviews. In this way, I was able to achieve Creswell's ideal situation, which is, "to blend the general steps with the specific research strategy steps...to look at qualitative data analysis the following steps from the specific to the general and as involving multiple levels of analysis" (p. 196).

When I considered interactions between participants in the university course, as they brought stories from the teaching field, the content of this category could not be predicted and thus required analytic induction. I referred to Seale's (1999) five steps of analytic induction to help me gain focus:

1. Roughly define the problem.
2. Construct a hypothetical explanation for the problem.
3. Examine the case to see whether it supports the hypothesis.
4. If the case does not fit, either reformulate the hypothesis or redefine the problem to exclude the negative case. After a few cases like this, a reasonable degree of certainty about the truth of the hypothesis will have built up.
5. Continue this search through several cases until negative instances are no longer found. At this point, early proponents of the method claimed, a universal generalization will have been established. (p. 83)

My hypotheses within my study developed within each strain of observation. In working to both develop curriculum by anticipating the needs of the participants, as well as

maintain reasonable limitations for my study, however, there were various points at which I needed to reformulate my intended direction.

## **VALIDITY**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) devised four criteria for validation of qualitative research, which are specifically informative for grounded theory research. According to Trochim (2006), Lincoln and Guba (1985) parted from the framework established for quantitative, mostly scientific studies, and proposed the use of the following terms for testing the validity of research studies: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These are the criteria that will illustrate the validity of my research study.

### **Credibility**

When describing researcher credibility, Jensen (2008) explains, “Questions for the researcher to consider in relation to credibility include the following: Were the appropriate participants selected for the topic? Was the appropriate data collection methodology used? Were participant responses open, complete, and truthful?” (p. 139-140). Participants’ perspectives are paramount in this criterion. Only the participant can validate the legitimacy of the study they are a part of. My study’s participants: Ruben, Randy, Kayari, and Zelda, all acknowledged and agreed that our concurrent research was occurring, theirs as arts-based researchers and mine testing multiple hypotheses, within the four categories (in-class dialogue, blog posts, triptych artworks, and an end-of-year interview). They were not only aware of the research being conducted, but claimed to find benefit to their lives from these studies. Dr. Lilith and Mary, for their participation as

professor and teaching assistant, also confirmed that the study was a sound and credible study.

### **Transferability**

Transferability explores whether or not there are other contexts and settings in which a study could exist. As Jensen (2008) explains, “researchers and readers can then begin to make connections from the revealed data to both local and entire community-level behavior and practice. These considerations are applied to qualitative methodologies through a process called *transferability*” (p. 887).

My study was devised from my own perspective, and drawing from what I knew to be the parameters of my own art education student teaching experience. A nearly identical study to this could have been easily performed in my student teaching semester over ten years ago, in another state. The few factors that would most likely differ, which are thoroughly described both in definition and usefulness to this research in the following chapter, are the current educational theories affecting preservice teachers and emerging art educators. The multiple contexts throughout this study: the purposes of the study; the natural connection of art-making and reflection, and the benefits to being a reflective practitioner in one’s class; are all transferable within this field.

Much of the research that I reviewed while devising this study were similar studies in which student teachers, teachers, teaching artists explored arts-based research (or similar branches of the methodology) in multiple settings at various points in their education or career. My particular study is a small glimpse of arts-based research used in one setting, so that the reader can make their own connections to their own experiences.

### **Dependability**

This study relied heavily on the curriculum I altered for the participants' university course. As Jensen (2008) describes:

A researcher can create a pretty good theoretical understanding of what the environment will be like and then design appropriate methodologies for studying it. Once the researcher is out in the field, he or she may find it to be quite different from what was expected. This could affect research procedures such as what types of interview questions are asked and how many interviews are conducted. Dependability in a qualitative study recognizes that the research context is evolving and that it cannot be completely understood a priori as a singular moment in time. Dependability accounts for these issues through relevant methodologies. (p. 209-210)

I knew that the majority of the assignments would remain similar to previous semesters' iterations of this course. However, since this was now a cohort in the class, and a course that evolved over the course of the Fall 2014 semester, my research evolved as well.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability, as a form of validity, was slightly more difficult to achieve, as I conducted this research study independently, rather than with a co-researcher. I had to find outside sources to review my research with me, to make sure I was developing accurate interpretations of the data. Jensen describes the purpose of confirmability as such:

Confirmability is an accurate means through which to verify the two basic goals of qualitative research: (1) to understand a phenomenon from the perspective of the research participants and (2) to understand the meanings people give to their experiences. Confirmability is concerned with providing evidence that the researcher's interpretations of participants' constructions are rooted in the participants' constructions and also that data analysis and the resulting findings and conclusions can be verified as reflective of and grounded in the participants' perceptions. (p. 113)

In order to check my research for confirmability, I often spoke with Dr. Lilith and Mary to gain their insights on class conversations of assignment submissions (triptych portions and blog posts). I also established a member check system (described below) and chronicled my potential researcher biases before, during, and after my research.

### **Peer Examination vs. Member Check**

Merriam (1998) defines member checks as “taking data in tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible” (p. 204). Given the predetermined timeline for my research, much of the data analysis in theory development of this research occurred after the end of the Fall 2014 semester. As the participants were no longer technically enrolled in the university, nor the class in which they conducted arts-based research, conducting member checks for my results proved to be unrealistic. The participants were busy job hunting, had new schedules, and checked their email less regularly than they had as full time university students. For this reason, my research relied heavily on peer examination, the asking of colleagues to comment on the findings as they emerged (Merriam, 1998). Mary, the teaching assistant for this course, was in a unique position to validate this research. As a classmate within my department, Mary was familiar with validation methods in qualitative research. She had also served as a T.A. in previous courses taken by the majority of the participants. Given her knowledge of research demands, her understanding of the participants’ personalities, and her regular participation in the class, Mary was an optimal source for validity checks.

## **Researcher Biases**

Mary also served as a helpful critical friend, an individual who agrees to offer honest constructive criticism in a specified situation, as I considered my researcher biases. She enrolled as a graduate student soon after completing an undergraduate program in art education. On the other hand, as a returning student following a 10-year career in the art education classroom, I have slightly different assumptions, worldviews, and orientations than Mary does. By discussing my assumptions with Mary, I was able to identify my biases, which helped me to predict and collect data that I would otherwise have neglected to look for. By identifying that I was expecting engaged and overachieving personality types as my participants, I was able to negate that bias. Based on interactions with the previous semester's preservice teachers, I also expected the participants of my study to begrudgingly complete all assignments, and complain openly about the course. By acknowledging that there was a need for heightened buy in from the participants, I was able to frame the course to make them feel comfortable and in control of the workload. Several of my other expectations and preconceived notions came to light over the course of my observations, and when I discussed them with Mary and Dr. Lilith, they were cast aside in the interest of unbiased research.

## **CONCLUSION**

Throughout the course of my research, there were multiple moments in which profound and highly reflective thoughts were shared among these participants. For them, this was a truly formative semester of growth and development into multiple career paths and professional ambitions. Through the use of grounded theory research methodology,

and Lincon and Guba's (1985) validity checks to guide me, I was able to collect the optimum amount of data this course had to offer.

In the next chapter, I will further describe the four student teachers in their artistic, teaching, conversations, writing abilities and preferences through brief vignettes. There will also be a small vignette of the instructor, T.A., and myself. Finally, I will offer rich descriptions of the course's required assignments and calendar. By providing a stronger picture of the participants and their university course, I aim to paint a clear picture of the individuals.

## **Chapter Four: Meet the Participants and Learn About the Course**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the participants' personal backgrounds, art-making habits, and general descriptions are discussed, in order to portray them as wholly as possible. The specifics of the university's student teaching course and the various assignments, themes, and schedules are explained in detail, to more clearly frame the class structure. First the participants' shared experiences of the semester are discussed. Second, descriptions break into separate portrayals of each individual. Third, I describe each participant in a brief vignette via the following categories: pseudonym, role in class, student type and class standing, degree sought, art forms used during this class, age, as well as immediate and long-term career goals. The final portion of this chapter is a detailed class description of the course itself, explaining the materials, assignments, class themes, and other course requirements.

### **PARTICIPANTS' SHARED EXPERIENCE**

All participants in this research study were either students and/or employees of the university. The class met weekly in the same Art Education department classroom, and all participants were aware that I was conducting research over the entire semester. All four preservice teachers completed not only the assignments for this class, but also finished their student teaching experience to fulfill degree requirements and state level teaching licensure. They completed the same class assignments (see Table 3 and Table 4). The participants also shared their work and experiences together in a seminar-style class, on a class blog, and through their art creations, which they also discussed in class.



The students were fairly familiar with one another, and many of them had been in previous classes together or had worked together in the department's student service organization. Beyond those points, however, the students had several differences in their prior experience, age, and long-term career goals (see Table 1).

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Role in Class</b>	<b>Student Type: Degree Sought</b>	<b>Degree Sought</b>	<b>Art Form(s) Used</b>	<b>Age during Class</b>	<b>Career Goals upon Completion</b>
<b>Kayari</b>	Student	Nontraditional: Graduate	M.A. in Art Education	Collage, paint, drawing	26	Immediate: Complete M.A. Long-Term: Curriculum Development
<b>Randy</b>	Student	Nontraditional: Undergraduate	B.F.A. in Visual Arts Studies	Paper model building, drawing	36	Immediate: Teaching Position Long-Term: Undecided
<b>Ruben</b>	Student	Nontraditional: Undergraduate	B.F.A. in Visual Arts Studies	Paint, collage, photocopy, print, drawing	30	Immediate: Teaching Position Long-Term: Administration
<b>Zelda</b>	Student	Traditional: Undergraduate	B.F.A. in Visual Arts Studies	Digital, drawing, paper cutting	22	Immediate: Office Administrator Position
<b>Mary</b>	Teaching Assistant	Graduate Student	M.A. in Art Education	N/A	25	Immediate: Complete M.A. Long-Term: Teaching Position
<b>Dr. Lilith</b>	Professor	N/A	N/A	N/A	49	Full time professorship
<b>Amanda (researcher)</b>	Participant Observer	Graduate Student	M.A. in Art Education	N/A	33	Immediate: Complete M.A. Long-Term: Enter Ph.D. Program

Table 1: Participants

## **PARTICIPANT VIGNETTES**

The following section provides a small biography for each participant in this research study. First, the preservice teachers are described in relation to their personal, educational experiences before attending this university. Second, aspects of the preservice teachers' university experience, such as personal factors that affect their student life, ambitions and motivations, and personal art-making choices, are highlighted. The purpose of this section is to contextualize what might be otherwise unrelated and un-generalizable data. By painting a picture of the participants as individuals through these vignettes, their arts-based research, in-class conversations, and written reflection are given deeper meaning and provide context for the reader. Vignettes are provided in the following order: Kayari, Randy, Ruben, Zelda, Mary, Dr. Lilith, and myself.

### **Kayari**

Kayari is a second year graduate student in the art education program at this university. Though her undergraduate degree was in anthropology, she has a passion for art and education. With the lens of wanting to have a socio-cultural impact, Kayari plans on writing art education curriculum with a social justice focus.

She is 26 years old with extensive experience working with lower income, high-risk student populations in camps and after school art programs in various cities. Kayari completed her student teaching semester at one elementary placement through an alternate certification program. She was enrolled in the student teaching seminar as a graduate elective, hence her alternate student teaching placement differed from the traditional 50/50 split between elementary and secondary placements that her classmates

completed. As Kayari is seeking alternate licensure from outside of the art education department, several facets of her field-based experience differed from her classmates. Her cooperating teacher chose to turn over the class to Kayari for a longer amount of time, hence Kayari was able to foster deeper relationships with her students. However, Kayari did not gain the insight of working with older students or a second cooperating teacher. Like myself, she was also analyzing her thesis data during her student teaching semester.

Kayari used a broad array of materials: wood, collaged images, paint, feathers, text, writing, and decoupage, in her arts-based research creation.

### **Randy**

He is the oldest and least traditional student in this cohort. Randy is in his late thirties, and has a high-school aged daughter. His wife is also a full-time student, and will be graduating with an undergraduate degree in 2015. Although having been kicked out of school in the ninth grade, Randy claims that his last art teacher seemed to genuinely care for him and always treated him with respect, making art class the fondest memories from an unhappy time.

Randy worked in cabinet making for twenty years, while exploring various other arts, such as airbrushing and paper model making, before returning to college to obtain his teaching certificate and licensure. Randy envisioned his career as “giving something back” to students who sought refuge in their art classes. He entered the program with the intention of offering a similar connection and outlet to the one he experienced as a student in his own technical arts or “shop” classroom.

Randy's chosen materials for his class assignments were almost entirely paper-made models, with the occasional use of wood, marker, and dental floss.

### **Ruben**

Ruben is a 30-year-old nontraditional undergraduate student. He is a former Marine who completed a tour in Iraq. He grew up interested in art, and participated in a gifted and talented art program in high school. Ruben was greatly motivated by his own high school art teacher. Ruben claims that he always planned to return to school to get his teaching certificate, and become an art educator, after his military days were over.

Ruben is a father, and his partner is also a full-time student. He and his partner both work part-time in addition to their schooling to provide for three children. Ruben is a very active student, currently serving in a leadership role at the state level of an art education organization. He regularly excels in his classes.

His chosen materials for arts-based research in this class were mainly painting, printing, drawing, collage work, and photocopying techniques.

### **Zelda**

As the one "traditional" student in this cohort, Zelda is much like many other university students. She is in her early twenties, recently married, and has no children. She does not work, and instead is using student loans and scholarships to attend the university full-time.

Like Ruben, she also found her passion for art in the relatively formative years of high school, and was accepted to the university as a studio art major. In the end of her

sophomore year, however, she realized that there were more applications for an art education degree than a fine arts degree, and changed her major. This shift only added one semester to her four-year graduation plan, and she was happy to work hard and maintain full class-loads to graduate in December.

Zelda's chosen media for class assignments were mostly digital, with one creative project based on animation. Her final artwork was a paper cutting.

### **Mary**

As a second year art education master's student, Mary served as the teaching assistant for this course. In Mary's undergraduate art education program, she completed her semester of student teaching solely in an elementary placement. Mary earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in art education in 2013. Her relatively recent experience as an undergraduate student in a comparable program gave her a unique perspective on the structure of this university course.

Having been the teaching assistant for several of this cohort's other art education classes at the university, Mary also had a deeper connection to, and understanding of, the undergraduates in this cohort. For these reasons, Mary served as my critical friend, and completed my member checks throughout my research.

In addition to her graduate work and teaching assistant position, Mary is also a painting instructor, and paints in her spare time. She works primarily with acrylic paint on canvas, but also creates watercolor greeting cards. She regularly makes artwork for personal enjoyment, gallery showings, and occasionally she sells her creations for profit.

**Dr. Lilith**

This professor had been at the university for a little over a year, and this was her first time teaching this student teaching seminar course at this location. Dr. Lilith brought a unique perspective because her previous preservice teacher education experience was with “general education” students in other states. She formatted a portion of this course to include art-making as a means of processing the student teaching experience. When I approached Dr. Lilith about my plans to reformat this class to encourage arts-based research for the student teachers, she was enthusiastic and had great insight into possible strategies.

Dr. Lilith is 49 years old and has three adult children who live in the same state. She is an active artist, attending museum and gallery exhibits as well as workshops in order to maintain her connection to production. Dr. Lilith has taught multiple subjects in multiple teaching settings, from elementary students to college seniors, from the state of Washington to Iceland. These experiences give her a worldview and a practical sensibility that is infused in her instruction. In her weekly class sessions for the course, the content and topics were scaffolded in a very constructivist nature. For example, while class calendars and scheduled assignments dictated the class to some extent, Dr. Lilith made an effort to frame the students’ unpacked experiences, or personal summaries of events and impressions gained from time in the field, with practical lessons and pointers for the students’ future careers. She fostered a sense of safety for the students to share any and all challenges and realizations during the journey as an art education student.

In regards to Dr. Lilith's rapport with this cohort in particular, she taught many of these students in another art education course in the previous semester. Dr. Lilith offered me her insights from observations she conducted with the preservice teachers in their various placements. This is why I asked Dr. Lilith to provide member checks to my assessments of the student teachers' perceptions of their schools, cooperating teachers, and school cultures.

### **Myself (Amanda)**

I am a second year graduate student in the art education program. The choice to return to graduate school came after ten years teaching in another southern state with students in kindergarten to tenth grade. As a Nationally Board Certified Teacher, I was prepared for the next challenge, which, for me, was graduate school.

I am a mother of two children under the age of seven, and my husband of ten years is also a teacher. The choice to relocate to this university was the first move my husband and I have made outside of the city where we met and started our family. Having only witnessed my own educational preparation and student teaching experience, I enjoyed being a part of the large and successful art education program at this university. I was most interested in finding or creating changes in what I consider to be the gaps of my own teacher preparation. I am most interested in art-making habits of preservice teachers and initially licensed arts teachers.

In this research setting, I acted as a participant observer, but I also developed a large part of the schedule, class calendar, blog, and most of the assignments for the course (see Table 3 and Table 4). Dr. Lilith and I discussed the objectives for the class, as

well as our hopes for the students in the class. Overall, we wanted the students to feel successful and informed as future educators, to be able to reflect upon their experiences as preservice teachers, and to maintain art-making as a part of their process into becoming educators. Along with the various graduation and licensure requirements, I contributed to constructing a course I felt would be the most beneficial to the cohort.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

I adapted the class calendar (see Table 2) from a previous semester's pacing, adding a personally created triptych, and removed multiple in-class presentations. The basic three portions of this class were the following: posts to the blog titled "experiences in art ed expressed" or [exartedex.blogspot.com](http://exartedex.blogspot.com) (see Figure 3), in-class discussions, and an arts-based research project to be completed by each student in the form of a triptych (see Table 2). The following sections explain each of these three projects in detail.

When I approached Dr. Lilith with the idea to make arts-based research a part of the student teaching semester assignments, she was incredibly motivated to make this aspect of the curriculum function in the best possible light for the students. She had experience framing the student teaching experience through art-making, and was excited about encouraging the student teachers to approach their art-making as research.



Date	Location	Agenda/ Activity	Assignment Due
<b>Monday Sept. 8 (1)</b>	Art 3.408	Syllabus, Forms, Assignments, and Myers-Briggs Test	none
<b>Monday Sept. 15 (2)</b>	Art 3.408	-Texas Education Agency Teacher Ethics Training -Dedicated Studio Time	-Myers-Briggs personality Profile: Teaching Style Reflection -NAEA renewed/ current *Lesson plans due Sept. 14 at 5 pm
<b>Monday Sept. 22 (3)</b>	Art 3.408	-Hidden Curriculum, nuances of boundaries, discoveries	-Triptych #1 (and blog post) due: pre-perception expectations of self as teacher, students, room, time spent, feelings, satisfaction, etc.
<b>Monday Sept. 29 (4)</b>	Art 3.408: meet with [REDACTED]	Resumé writing and cover letters with interviewer @ 6:00	-PPR test prep and exam results due In print out): <a href="https://practice.ets.org/iptmgr/disp">https://practice.ets.org/iptmgr/disp</a>
<b>Monday Oct. 6 (5)</b>	Online: Canvas (Mary to post questions)	Posts and dialogue: Classroom Management basics, exceptional students, etc. (taken from CT Q & A)	-Q & A responses (posted in topic specific threads) from Q & A with cooperating teacher
<b>Monday Oct. 13 (6)</b>	Art 3.408	-Digication and resume upload -Dedicated studio time	-E-Portfolio Assignment #1 due: Resume, studio work, personalization, About section
<b>Monday Oct. 20 (7)</b>	Online: Canvas (Mary to post articles and readings)	Interview Informational (Interview Prep)	-Triptych #2 (and blog post) due: Self-realization, metamorphosis from pre-perception to now (new or deeper from first)
<b>Monday Oct. 27 (8)</b>	Art 3.408 practice interview [REDACTED]	Tentative Group Mock Interview	-Interview Portfolio due
<b>Monday Nov. 3 (9)</b>	Art 3.408	-Graduation Requirements check-in -Dedicated Studio time	-Art Content Exam due (from booklet)
<b>Monday Nov. 10 (10)</b>	Art 3.408	-Scope and Sequence: group poster review and exercise -Common Core review	None
<b>Monday Nov. 17 (11)</b>	Art 3.408	*Certification updates (?) Dedicated Studio Time	E-Portfolio Assignment #2 due Sample lesson plan, final update to teaching philosophy
<b>Monday Nov. 24 (12)</b>	Online (Mary will post topics/ questions)	New Knowledge Exploration Dialogue	-Photo Safari: Upload 6-10 photos of strategies/ systems/ preps that work in their CT's classes
<b>Monday Dec. 1 (13)</b>	TBA: Celebration	New Knowledge Summary (pecha kucha)	Triptych #3 (and blog post) due: Self as the art teacher, art maker, and art advocate: What's developed, what was shed, what's to come

Table 2: EDC 370 Course Calendar Fall 2014

## Triptych

Dr. Lilith and I devised the plan for a triptych project in order to convey a chronological and subject relationship in the artworks my participants were creating. As opposed to the classic Renaissance examples, which traditionally served as altarpieces in Christian churches, we wanted to allow for a more contemporary approach to the same concept. Modern-day triptychs are created in any variety of media, and may or may not actually be displayed together. The aspects of a triptych that I hoped to maintain were the inter-relation between each of the three portions, and the artist's understanding that his/her work was a portion of a whole, even though each piece was completed at a different time, and with a slightly different theme.

	Theme/Topic in Triptych	Sources of Inspiration and Reflection	Relation to blog post
<b>Triptych Portion 1: Week Two</b>	Preconceived notions	Self as art educator, current school placement, cooperating teacher, and general environment	Art creation documented as a portion of blog post #1, accompanying a written reflection of the initial student teaching experience
<b>Triptych Portion 2 : Week 8</b>	Transition from primary grades to secondary grades/ transition to more active role as classroom teacher	Personal truths proven or disproven in new placement, hidden curriculum, ability and confidence	Art creation documented as a portion of blog post #2, accompanying a written reflection of current transitions for the preservice teacher
<b>Triptych Portion 3 : Week 15</b>	Student to Teacher: As a Whole	Final reflection on pervasive themes in the transition from student, to student-teacher, to teacher	Art creation documented as a portion of blog post #5, accompanying a written reflection on the concept of self as art educator, as well as a response to the semester's arts-based research

Table 3: Triptych Assignments

In the first class session, the preservice teachers learned of my role as an observer researcher, and also learned that their assignments were not attributed to my

investigations quite as directly. They also discovered that I would be observing their blog posts, their in-class discussions, and their triptychs, but not that the concept of arts-based research was the crux of my research.

What the students were told about the triptych aspect of the class was that they were going to engage with art-making as a means of reflecting upon, communicating about, and reacting to the student teaching experience, and that each portion of the triptych would serve as a stand-alone snapshot of their journey at this formative time. These were essentially the only parameters placed on this assignment, aside from deadlines on each portion. The student teachers were informed that they would be bringing the pieces to class in order to share and discuss them, but the students were reassured that the format would not be typical studio critique, but rather exploring the works together in three sessions, and then as a whole completed series in the final class. The triptych portions were not required to match in size, shape, or media, but were expected to serve as three portions of one completed work at the end of the semester. Participants were to view their art-making as a form of research into reflecting upon their student teaching experiences, and not as an independently standing piece to be critiqued based only upon aesthetic qualities.

### **Blog Posts**

There were five total assigned blog posts (see Table 4). The first was a written description of the participants' preconceptions of the teaching profession. This initial blog post was tailored to match the first art-making assignment, in order to allow the participants to connect to their experiences in the student teacher role to their writing by

creating both textual and visual representations. By scheduling the assignments in this way, the student teachers were immediately connecting their artwork to their explanatory writing. Interestingly, in all submissions for the first blog post, student teachers included descriptions and photos of their first triptych piece, though reflections and textual context to the triptych portions were not requested.

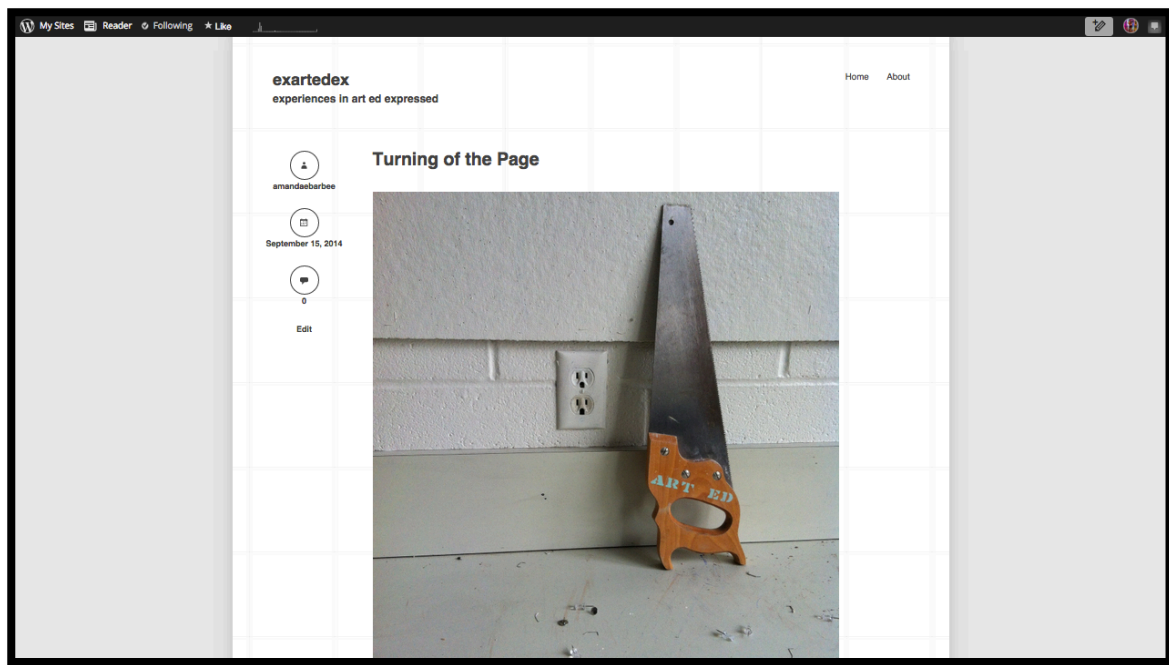


Figure 3: Screen Shot of exartedex blog

	Topic visited in blog post	Specific directions or suggested reflections	Relation to Triptych Portion
<b>Blog Post 1:</b>	Preconceived notions	Self as art educator, current school placement, cooperating teacher, and general environment	Written reflection of the initial student teaching experience
<b>Blog Post 2:</b>	Transition from primary grades to secondary grades/ transition to more active role as classroom teacher	"Personal truths" proven or disproven in new placement, hidden curriculum, ability and confidence	Written reflection of current transitions for the preservice teacher
<b>Blog Post 3:</b>	Business Card	Present and future: Create two separate business cards, one for now, and the other for your future career	N/A
<b>Blog Post 4:</b>	Illustrated Lesson Plan: Hunter Lesson Plan Format	Create an entirely visual representation of your next unit. Can you express it without text?	N/A
<b>Blog Post 5:</b>	Student to Teacher: As a Whole	Final reflection on pervasive themes in the transition from student, to student-teacher, to teacher	Written reflection on the concept of self as art educator, as well as a response to the semester's arts-based research

Table 4: Blog Post Assignments

The second blog assignment was a brief written response on the topic of *hidden curriculum*. The student teachers discussed this topic in the seminar class the week before writing the second blog post. The participants were to enter into their school placements familiar with the concept of hidden curriculum, identify its existence throughout a school culture, and then write a blog post that provided a rich description and analysis of their experiences with hidden curriculum. In essence, the student teachers investigated their own student teaching environments to identify this concept.

By the mid-point of the semester, three of the four preservice teachers were transitioning from their elementary placement to their secondary placement. The third blog post assignment mirrored the second triptych assignment. The student teachers reflected upon the differences in their elementary and secondary placement, and

considered their perceptions of teaching and learning in the art classroom, that either solidified or were disproven entirely in their new student teaching placement. In these posts, participants posted a preview of their triptych in process, showing evidence that they had begun processing their student teaching experiences. Moreover, their reflections and creations were working hand-in-hand.

The fourth blog post assignment was quite a bit more practical in nature than others. At this point in the course calendar, around the tenth week of the semester, the student teachers were updating their resumés and creating portfolios for their upcoming job interviews. To allow them an opportunity to reflect upon their current place in the field of art education and their expected future, the student teachers created two business cards: one with their current title, and one with their future goal upon graduation (see Figure 4). The second part to this assignment was to create an upcoming lesson plan using visual note-taking, following Madeleine Hunter's lesson plan format (see Figure 5), adapted to allow room for each section to be drawn or illustrated (see Figure 6).

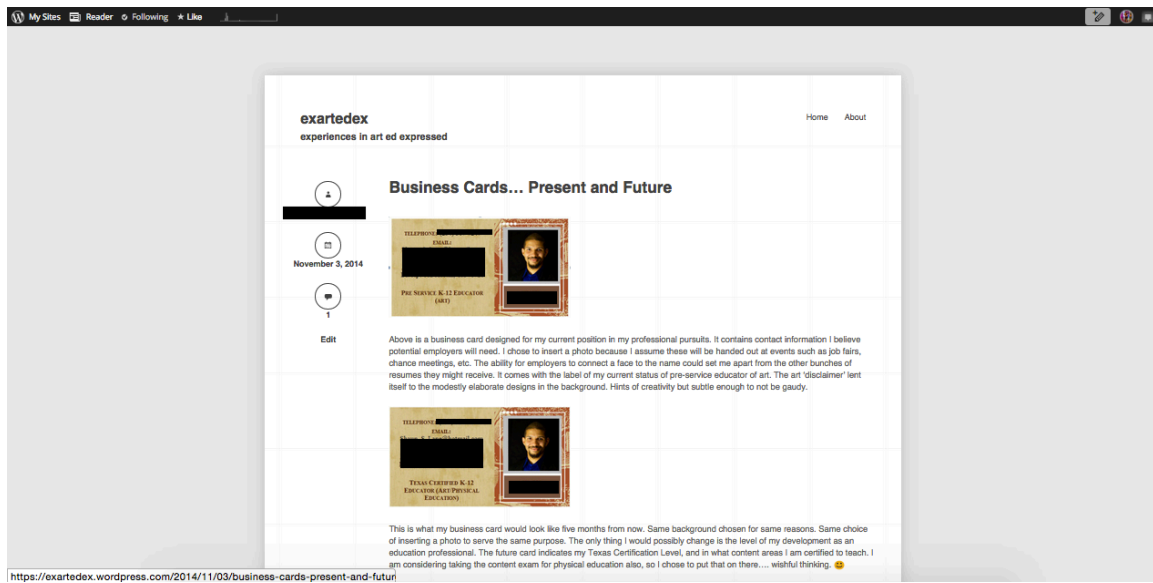


Figure 4: Business Card Post Example

The fifth blog post assignment combined the third portion of the student teacher's triptychs. Participants shared a cumulative reflection and assessment of the semester's experiences, as represented in their art. In this assignment, the participants considered their natural preferences between process or product, the most poignant moments from the student teaching semester, and explained the intent or symbolism behind their artistic choices in their triptych creations. The participants chose to recap experiences, feelings and responses to those teaching and learning experiences from their placements, as well as their hopes and deeper meaning in the work they created. Discussions about the triptychs focused toward process and materials used. This emphasis on process offered a great insight into the benefits and challenges of using a blog for communal discussions and assignments.

Lesson Details: Number & Age/ Grade of students	Lesson Plan Objectives	Materials
Standards addressed/ Student Expectations	Anticipatory Set/ Hook	
Teaching/ Instructional Process		
Guided Practice and Monitoring		
Closure	Independent Practice/ Extension/ Reinforcement	

Figure 5: Madeline Hunter Visual Lesson Plan Model Format

Lesson Details: Number & Age/ Grade of students	Lesson Plan Objectives	Materials
Standards addressed/ Student Expectations	Anticipatory Set/ Hook	
Teaching/ Instructional Process		
Guided Practice and Monitoring		
Closure	Independent Practice/ Extension/ Reinforcement	

Figure 6: Completed Madeline Hunter Visual Lesson Plan



While there was no specific number of required responses to classmates' blog posts, responses were an ongoing expectation. Students mentioned other students' comments and posts during seminar discussions, and often referred to particularly memorable insights or lasting impressions from one another's posts. While this aspect of the blog post assignment was not graded, the information yielded important results during my analysis and triangulation of the data.

### **In-class Discussions**

A significant factor in this course, and in turn my research, was the weekly in-class discussion that the student teaching assistant, Mary, and Dr. Lilith facilitated. The class sessions were two hours in length and consisted of a regular agenda. First, Dr. Lilith completed a quick check-in on upcoming assignments or calendar adjustments, attended to lesson plans or observation scheduling matters, and offered celebrations or congratulations witnessed during either her own placement visits, or through updates from cooperating teachers. In this small habit, the student teachers were immediately placed in a position of garnering information and praise.

Immediately following her check-in Dr. Lilith either made a blanket offer for student teachers to share anything they would like to, or she would frame a question for them to consider and respond to. At this point, student teachers would unpack their week since the last meeting. To do so, participants would share a problem and ask for suggestions. Other times, students shared successes and insights gained in the week. At all points, the group discussed their experiences comfortably and naturally, and often followed up one story with a similar one. The preservice teachers repeatedly remarked on

being surprised by the overlap and similarity in experiences in their vastly different placements. Over the course of these discussions, the student teachers became aware of their weaknesses and their strengths, as well as the growth they had achieved as professional educators.

Dr. Lilith often responded to shared experiences with questions to guide the preservice teachers toward clarifying their own experiences. The act of recapping and revisiting the lingering moments from the student teachers' placements was not only cathartic and communal, but was also an opportunity to deeply process and analyze the lessons gained. In many cases, it helped the group to discuss the next step to address the issues at hand.

Profound realizations occurred at various points for some students during this portion of the class. For others, there was liberation in sharing new awareness and understandings of themselves as teachers, and their role in their specific placements. While not an easily quantifiable or gradable portion of this course, comments from the participants demonstrate that it was invaluable for the preservice teachers' personal and professional development.

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter outlined, in detail, both the individuals involved in my research and the parameters of the student teaching seminar. By sharing the individual characteristics of each participant, and the individual aspects of the university class during the student teaching semester, the reader can contextualize my study.

Chapter 5 will explore thoroughly the participants' development from student to student teacher, to teacher. Through blog submissions, selected in-class commentaries, and the analysis of the participants' arts-based research, I will track the growth and development of the participants. I will also analyze the student-to-educator transition each participant experienced over the course of the semester.

## **Chapter Five: Interpretation of Data**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I will clarify the process of data analysis strategies, in both my emphasis and implementation. As Denzin and Lincoln (1998) explain, there are three subprocesses in the analysis of qualitative data: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction is described as “data summaries, coding, finding themes, clustering, and writing stories,” (p. 180). My process took the form of open coding followed by axial coding, as described in Chapter 4. As for data display, I part ways with Denzin and Lincoln (1998) in their assertion that “more focused displays may include structured summaries, synopses...or other diagrams and matrices with text rather than numbers in cells” (p. 180). With the plethora of data I accumulated over the course of the Fall 2014 semester, I had not only saturated various categories, but had enough coded data to analyze each participants’ commentary within each category as plots on a chart. I measured each participant’s understandings and reflections, individually, within the framework of the Three Models of Understanding/Art-Making (Pearse, 1983; Rolling, 2013), as discussed in Chapter 3. Conclusions were easily visible from the charts, and I triangulated my conclusions with participants’ written reflections or quotes. At this point in my research, I truly saw a “data transformation...as information is condensed, clustered, sorted, and linked...” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 181).

Though this chapter will be aligned based on the pervading themes found in the data for each participant, it is important to understand as the data accumulated during the

study, the themes and foci changed. For example, my original research problem rested heavily upon the participants' interaction on the class blog posts. Early in the data collection, however, it became clear that the number of students in the course allowed for deeper interaction during the in-class sessions, and the blog served more as a receptacle for short reflections and to house the visual aspects to class requirements (i.e. photos of the business card assignment). To respond accordingly, and collect the most relevant data, I had to change my collection foci (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012). In this chapter the categories of data, as defined in the grounded theory methodology, will each offer several insights to multiple themes. As these themes presented themselves, several became the larger focus of the participants for a time, and in some cases the themes ebbed in participant focus and frequency several times throughout the semester. These shifts will be explained in brief narratives.

#### **A NOTE ON AUDIO RECORDING AND TRANSCRIPTION METHOD AS EARLY CODING**

Unaware of the time commitment involved in transcribing audio recordings, I chose to record each class meeting on my phone, as a voice memo. Using a very common communication tool for data collection proved to be a good choice, as many times the participants behaved as if they were not being audio-recorded at all, or were comfortable moving the phone closer to themselves as they spoke. By recording every class session and interview, I collected over 20 hours of audio data to transcribe for coding and analysis. I was aware that at my fastest, I could only hope to transcribe each minute of audio in four minutes (Flick, 2007), meaning I had created roughly 80 hours of

transcribing time for myself. Fortunately, as is protocol for grounded theory research, though I had not transcribed each class meeting, I listened to each recording before the next class, in order to take note of the emerging themes and topics. By having the class recordings ready for review throughout the semester, I was able to identify and plot out themes that were maintaining traction in regards to my study.

As for my transcription concerns, I found a solution in software called Dragon Dictate. I wore the Dragon Dictate headset, armed with a microphone and listening software to type out my words for me. I placed my ear buds underneath the headset, and played the audio files for myself. I then repeated the words as they were spoken, added notes where pauses, interruptions, or unspoken events took place, and saw the words appear on the page. With a few minor glitches, this process worked magnificently well, and gave me the unique opportunity to recite the words of my participants aloud. I feel that this method of coding was very beneficial. By not only listening, but reciting what I heard, I was taken to the locations and time periods of the conversations and observations, which connected me, as the researcher, with the moods, outside factors, and subtle engagements of those times. I believe that this recitation exercise made my analysis richer and more personal, having literally immersed myself in the data.

### **Rhetorical Structure**

There is no denying that grounded theory research naturally takes "storytelling" undertones, if for no other reason than because of the level of engagement with other individuals. My research interests rest between biography of the four participants'

processes and development, with and through art-making, and my desire to explore a thoroughly artistic research methodology. This research is reported with the use of an embedded rhetorical structure for that very reason. As a researcher's findings are the key to developing additional theory, with concepts of common connections, the structure of my reports have formed atypically to most qualitative research. For example, even though a research question and research problem were established before any research began, the question shifted during data collection and analysis. My initial intention was to explore the use of a blog that incorporated art-making and reflection. It ended with a broader focus to include all tools the participants utilized in their reflective processes. Even within my literature review, key concepts and strict realizations of definitions and working concepts had to be softened or revisited entirely, as is typical of grounded theory.

Within Chapter 3 is a description of the categories that appeared throughout the axial coding process. These derived from causal conditions, various contexts, experiences and reflections specific to each participant, and consequences observed over the course of the semester. To provide further clarity, this chapter will clarify the relationship between my theories and hypotheses to existing knowledge. Simply put, in my role of researcher, reflexivity was an understood habit, and a cornerstone of my experience.

## **CHARTING THE DATA**

Though this was a qualitative study, the content found within the data categories: blog posts, in-class conversations, triptych inspiration and reflections, and end-of-

semester interviews, were all considered within Pearse's (1983) framework for identifying three specific understanding/art-making systems. They are: Empirical-Analytic Art-making Model (Technical Knowing) I, Interpretive-Hermeneutic Art-making Model (Situational Knowing) II, and Critical-Theoretic Art-making Model (Critical Knowing) III. Rolling (2013) argues that these three models work in opposition of one another. I did not find this to be an absolute in my research, as many participants offered commentary that corresponded with both Model I and Model III in the same train of thought. I tend to believe that people can carry multiple levels of understanding of one event without conflict.

The five consistent themes throughout the semester were: identity (depicted in the charts as blue), reflection (orange), growth and change (green), teaching and learning (red), and relationships (purple). At mid-semester, I noticed the participants' reflections had developed beyond a critical level of understanding and art-making. The participants were not only ruminating on conversations and events that occurred in their placements, but also reacting and responding to those moments, thus practicing *reflexivity*. For instance, one participant mentioned he was having a difficult time making connections in his secondary placement. With some reflection, he realized that the students knew nothing of his passion for art-making, only that he wanted to teach art. He decided to introduce his students to a local artist who was also a personal friend. In this effort, the participant changed the students' perception of him, as a teacher. The participants was now as an active member of the art community and a personable individual. The participant saw an opportunity to engage his students and familiarize them with local art,



thereby practicing reflexivity. With various other examples among the participants, reflexivity (turquoise) became the final theme in this study.

All data is charted by participant, and completely independent of one another. I chose to look at the participants individually, rather than in comparison to each other. I did so because of their broad differences as people and their unique student teaching experiences. In addition to charting each participant's comment that correlated with the Three Models of Understanding/ Art-Making, I also quantified the frequency. In the charts and figures below (see Figures 7 through 34) over the months of the semester (horizontal: x-axis) the size of each hexagon indicates the number of incidences of each Model (vertical: y-axis) within each color-coded theme. It is important to note that there is no point along the x-axis for late November, as students were excused from all classes and assignments for the Thanksgiving holiday.

## **ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANT DATA**

### **Kayari**

Kayari is a graduate student, and as such, was completing an alternate licensure. One of the largest factors in this difference from her classmates was that her full student teaching experience occurred in one placement. For the entire 12-week time, Kayari progressed into teaching all of the K-5 grade levels at her elementary placement. She was so involved in the lessons, and so devoted to her students' success, that Kayari failed to entirely *phase out* in her placement. Therefore, she never returned to the role of observer and teacher's assistant before leaving the school entirely. She was profoundly motivated

by the well-being and social/emotional health of her students, and her overall perspective was shaped by her undergraduate anthropology degree.

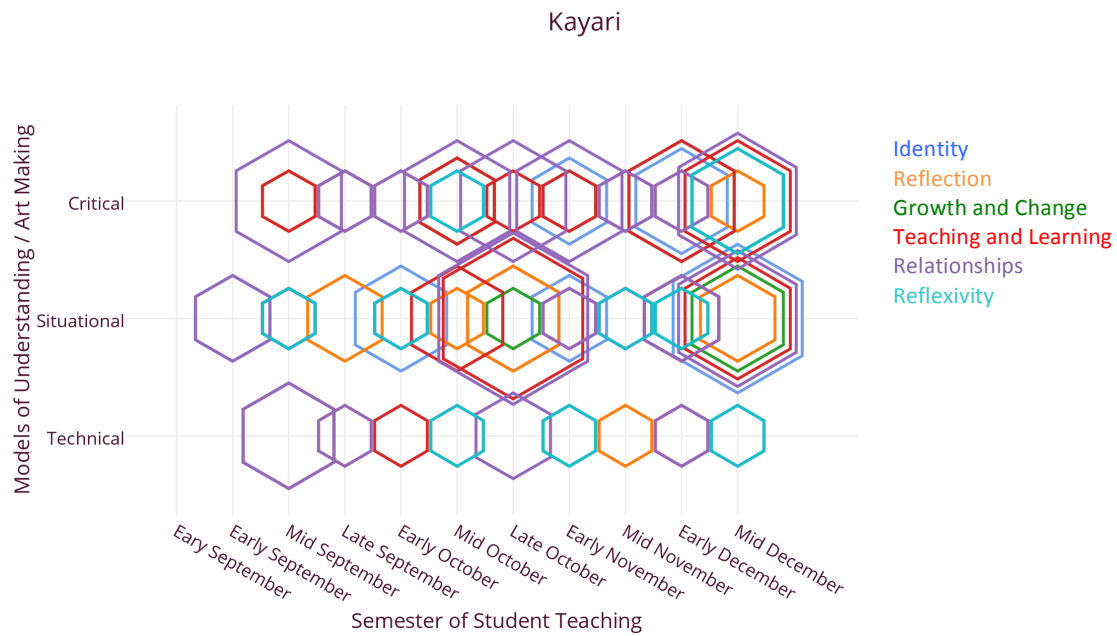


Figure 7: Kayari: All Themes

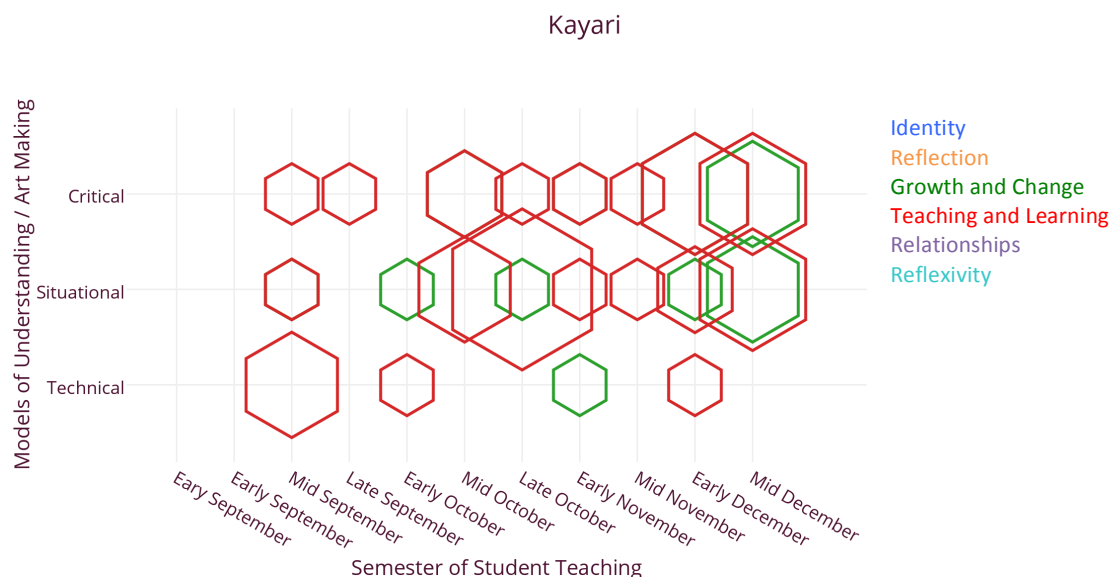


Figure 8: Kayari: Growth & Change and Teaching & Learning

When mentioning growth and change, Kayari often referred to her students' growth and change, rather than her own. Over the semester, she made a personal goal of connecting with students whom she felt were underserved or disenfranchised. One particular child became a focus for Kayari. By creating a deep connection with him, she was able to discover outlying factors affecting his behaviors and emotions in class:

Hearing that his father is out of the picture, and he's a fifth grader. He's really going through addressing his own masculinity. And I think a lot of it had to do with his power and masculinity. You just could not strip him of that or he was not going to behave. You know? (personal communication, January 13, 2015)

In regards to teaching and learning, Kayari often wondered how the teachers in her placement could better engage their students. She made the connection early on that there was a prevalent power struggle in the student-teacher relationship. Kayari took note of the ways her CT was learning to appropriately discipline, and the growth and change

witnessed in the students when they were treated with respect in the art room. As shown in her first triptych (see Figure 9), Kayari was concerned more with institutional discipline than relating to her individual students.



Figure 9: Kayari: First Triptych Piece

One platform Kayari voiced at the start of the semester was her concern with the appropriation and repackaging of cultural artifacts for art projects. This is reflected in Figure 16, in the found image of the man holding and *presenting* an African mask for an unknown audience. Kayari was conscious of her race and ethnicity as a Caucasian woman when approaching lessons dealing with the artwork of other races or ethnicities. Her effort to bring awareness and open conversation about cultural differences and social/racial inequality extended into her teaching.

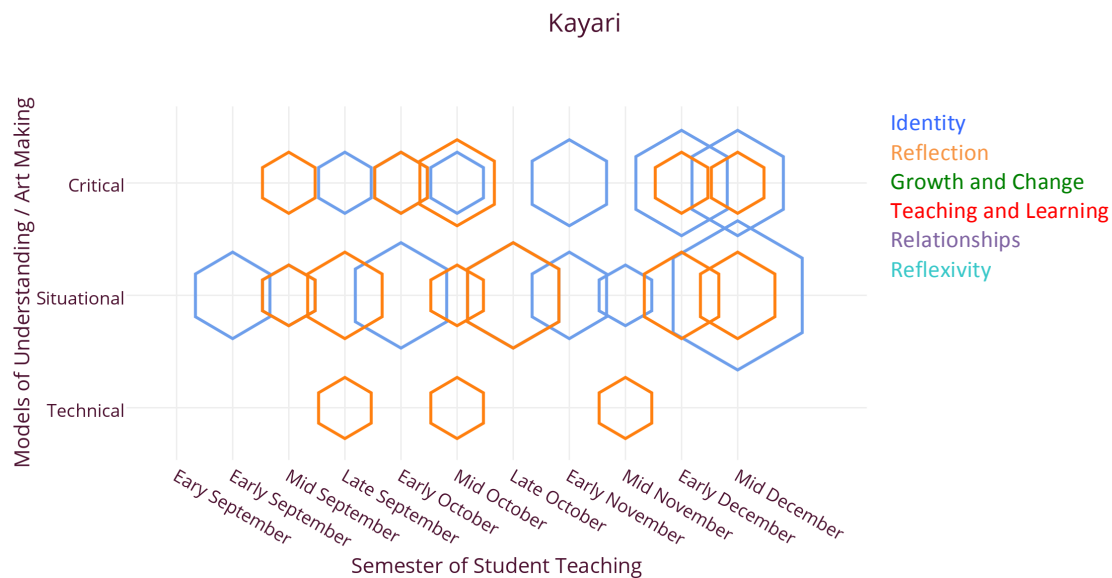


Figure 10: Kayari: Identity and Reflection

Kayari's core objective was to offer a safe space for her students to express and process their own feelings through art. She often designed her lessons to relate to emotions, positive self-perception, or larger social justice themes. Kayari brought experience from having conducted studies in juvenile detention facilitates and low-

income housing studies she performed in Philadelphia as a part of her undergraduate work. Though she recognized the often unspoken and unaddressed challenges for youth of color or lower socio-economic brackets, she considered self-awareness and a sound education to be the door to a better life. Kayari wanted to present this opportunity, and her place in creating a welcoming environment for learning and growth, in her second triptych piece (see Figure 11).





Figure 11: Kayari: Second Triptych Piece

Kayari sought to help her students to think of the *bigger picture* in the world around them. In the final lesson she wrote for her students, Kayari taught a community improvement poster lesson for the third and fourth grades. The students were encouraged to identify a need in their community, devise a solution for the problem, and design an

awareness poster to bolster support from the community. With topics ranging from *Fresh Foods for Neighbors* to *Stop Bullying*, the students became problem-solvers for real community needs. Kayari noted being especially impressed with the buy-in and individual efforts put forth by the students on this last project.

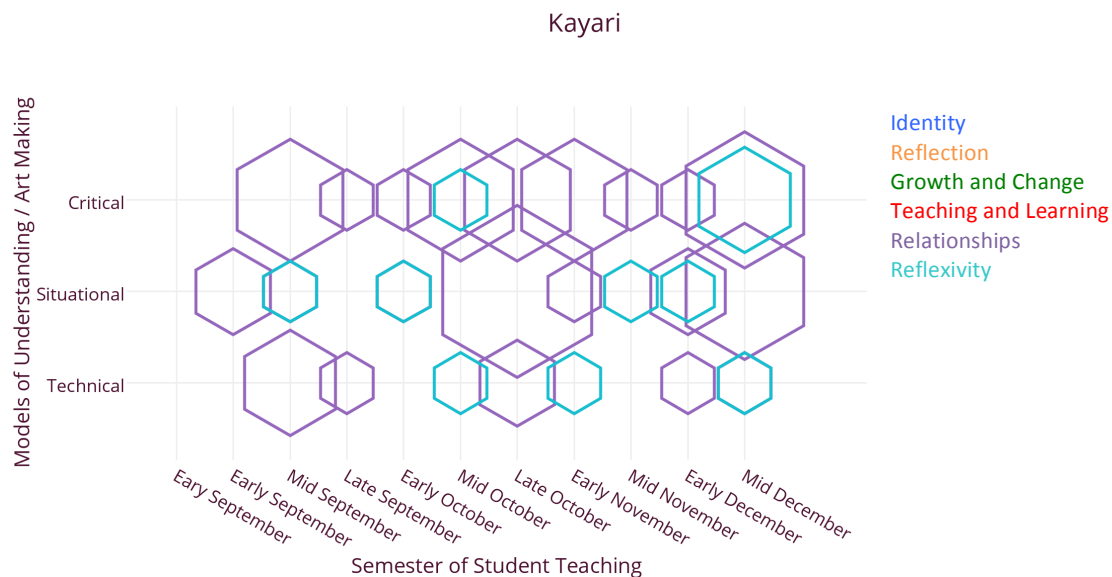


Figure 12: Kayari: Relationships and Reflexivity

While Kayari offered relatively little commentary that fell within the “technical” Model of Understanding/ Art-Making, within the themes of Relationships and Reflexivity, she remained consistent in these throughout the year. There was neither an increase nor decrease in her drive to connect with others, or respond to their needs. The motivations behind these two themes, for Kayari, rested nearly entirely in emotional/social wellbeing and care for her students. In comparison to the other



participants of this study, Kayari approached her position as a teacher and an artist as a social activist, and made more of her educational decisions from that specific perspective.



Figure 13: Kayari: Final Triptych Piece Front (left) and Back (right)

Her final triptych, a two-sided collage, was the first time Kayari focused on herself (Figure 13). This occurred on the back of the piece, with the words, “I have completely changed,” made clear in a collaged piece of text, under an emphasized lightning bolt. The front, an image of stacked shipping containers, was intended to suggest a hopeful path. Kayari approached her triptychs throughout the semester with an additional parameter to the class requirements:

I like using collage because it gives me an opportunity to find meaning and appropriate and change the context of images to fulfill my needs to communicate my message...So basically, I felt like the art-making was a metaphor of the student teaching. It was like I had a set amount of resources in front of me, and I had to manipulate them and do what I could with them. It's kind of a stretch, but I feel like that is what being an educator and a restricted environment, or making art with restricted materials. (personal communication, January 13, 2015)

## Randy

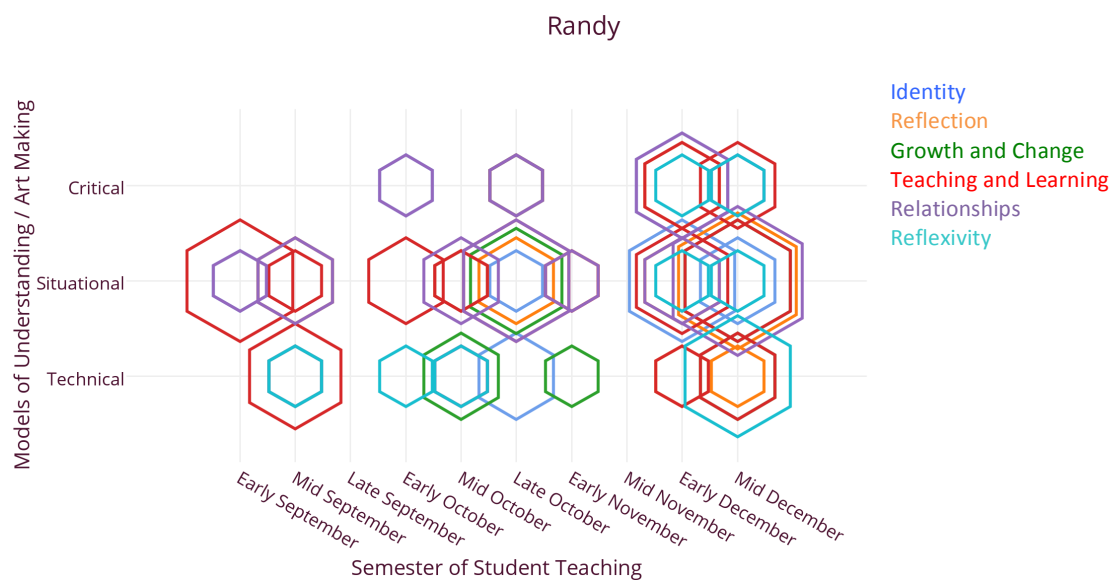


Figure 14: Randy: All Themes

Randy is the least-traditional participant of the study, and is the only one who did not complete high school in a traditional setting. A quiet man, Randy was constantly sketching in his notebook during university classes. He rarely offered commentary without being asked, and then gave short responses when he spoke. He is also a succinct writer, with short poignant blog posts and triptych reflections. Of all participants, Randy had the least printed data to code.

As a teacher, Randy entered the semester hoping to hone his skills and network among colleagues enough to secure a woodshop or sculpture teaching position. He envisioned working in a high school setting and expected to connect with teenagers much more than elementary-age students.

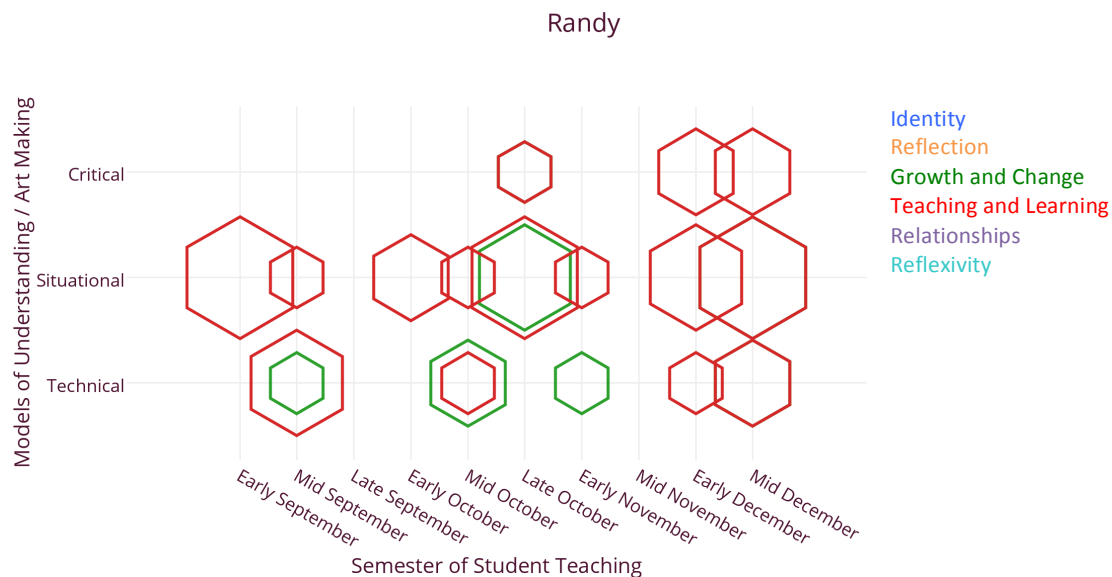


Figure 15: Randy: Growth & Change and Teaching & Learning

Randy wrote detailed lesson plans, and insisted on attempting every project he intended to teach at least twice, before he felt comfortable presenting it to his students. Randy developed dynamic and unique lessons at both his elementary and secondary placement, though he rarely mentioned or reflected upon those lessons in class. It would seem that Randy was comfortable in his own method as a lesson planner, as he did not show much growth in this topic.

One of Randy's earliest realizations in regards to his students was that students do not develop at the same rate. In his first triptych portion Randy symbolized the *roll of the dice* in regards to teaching. His expectations of students' abilities in art, strength of the lesson plans he wrote, motivation from students, and many other factors were all variables in each class period of each day. Randy overcame these challenges by focusing his efforts on getting to know his students better, in order to prepare lessons with his specific students in mind.

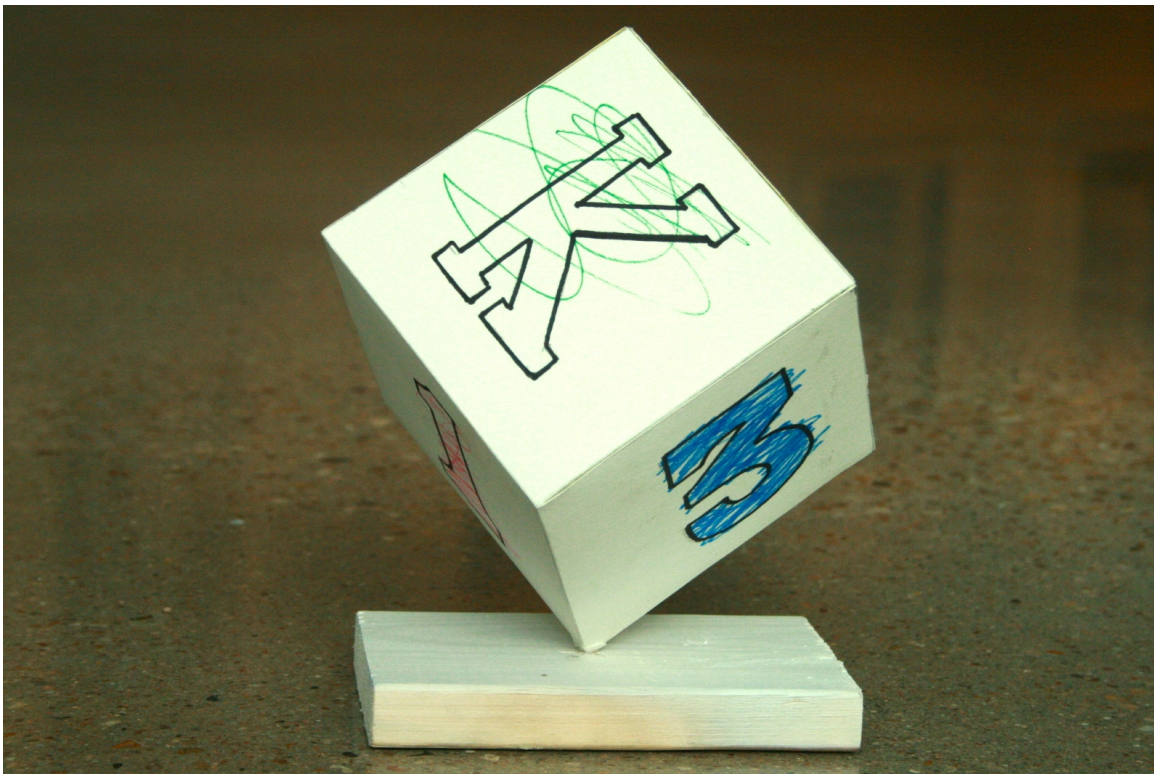


Figure 16: Randy: First Triptych Piece

Randy positioned himself as a respectful and observant assistant to his cooperating teachers (CTs). Randy rarely mentioned growing or changing verbally during



in-class dialogue, but was deeply reflective in his blog posts, written reflections, and artistic intent.

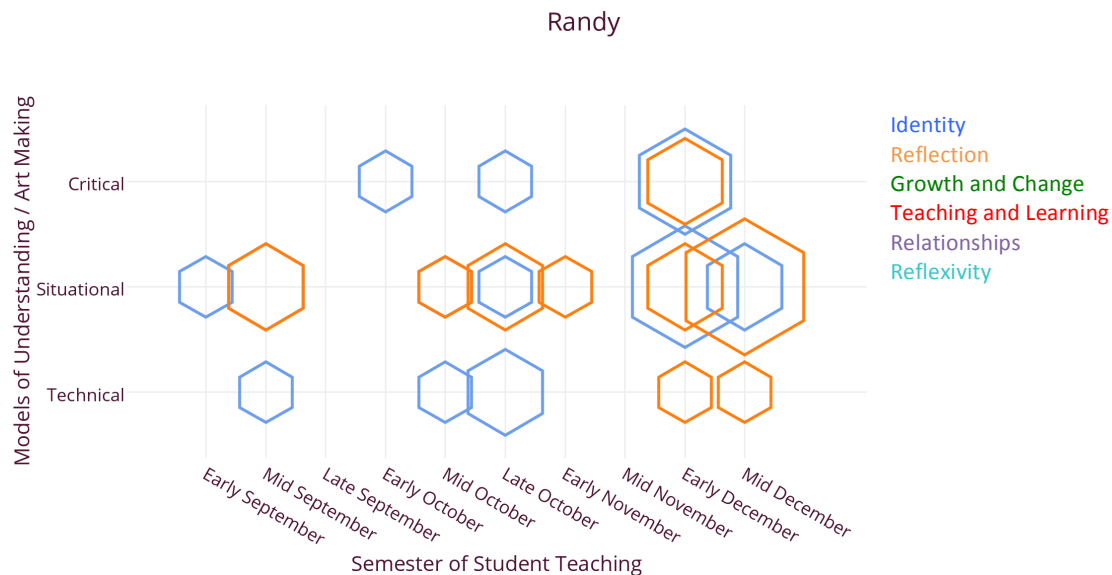


Figure 17: Randy: Identity and Reflection

As a highly reflective participant in this study, most of Randy's reflections were more extrinsic than self-reflective. Taking his entire personality into account, this seems less a lack of self-knowing. Randy's lack of comments appear more likely an indication of his self-identity as a constant learner and developing individual. In most noted incidences of identity commentary, Randy considered himself as a part of *the larger picture* including his place in the classroom and school. As he developed and grew as a teacher, he felt he was *adding links to the chain* in his experience and ability in the profession (see Figure 18).

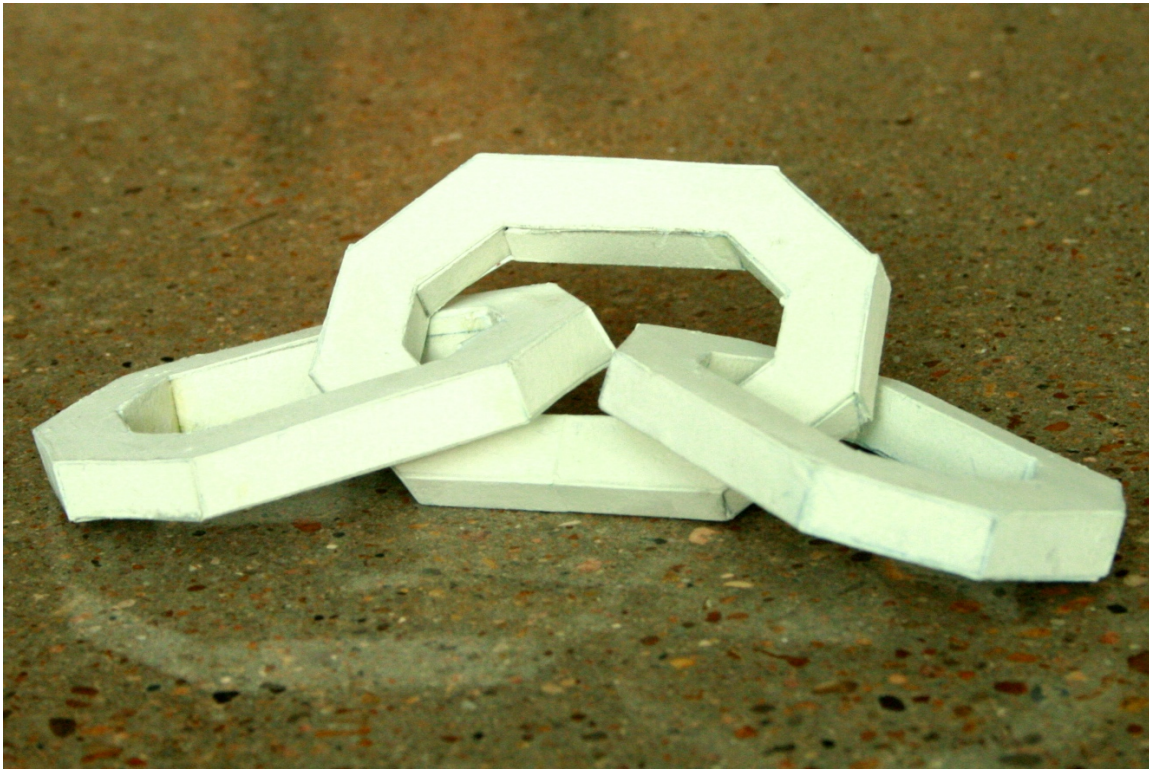


Figure 18: Randy: Second Triptych Piece

In his second placement, in a high school, Randy and his CT had differing opinions on a behavioral issue. The CT believed that students were being disrespectful to Randy, and corrected their behavior on Randy's behalf. While Randy maintained his respect for the CT, and acknowledged the CT's *ownership* of the class, Randy made note of how he would handle that situation differently. In *his* class, Randy planned to act accordingly to the wishes and feelings of the disrespected individual.



Figure 19: Randy: Final Triptych Piece

Randy's final triptych (see Figure 19) of a scale was a metaphor for his desire to balance the events taking place in his student teaching experiences. The piece also represented how to learn from even the less than desirable moments and outcomes. As he described during an in-class session, Randy made a request of his students and was satisfied with their response. The CT, however, was unhappy with the students' behavior:

My CT came and took those three boys up, and took them outside, and I had no idea why. After class he came up to me to tell me that he had taken them outside and had taken their zines from them, and asked them if that was all they had done that day. He told them, basically, that they had been so disrespectful to me, by using that as social time instead of working...it had been my class to teach at that

time, and I didn't feel disrespected at all! (personal communication, December 8, 2014)

Even though he disagreed with a behavior management or instructional choice made by his CT, Randy actively chose to learn from the experience, and consider the other side, without negative connotations toward others involved, or toward the profession in general. From that experience, Randy was able to articulate a major consideration for his future teaching:

The person getting disrespected is the one that gets to choose whether you're respected or not...which is why balance is important. When I was talking about getting both sides of something...in getting to see something I don't agree with, it doesn't really mean it's good or bad, it just means it's not the style I will use. (personal communication, December 8, 2014)

In Randy's case, the explanation in the form of an image or artistic creation came after his experiences in the classroom. His final triptych piece was a scale, created to represent this event from his second placement. It also represents what he chose to take from this moment into his own classroom.



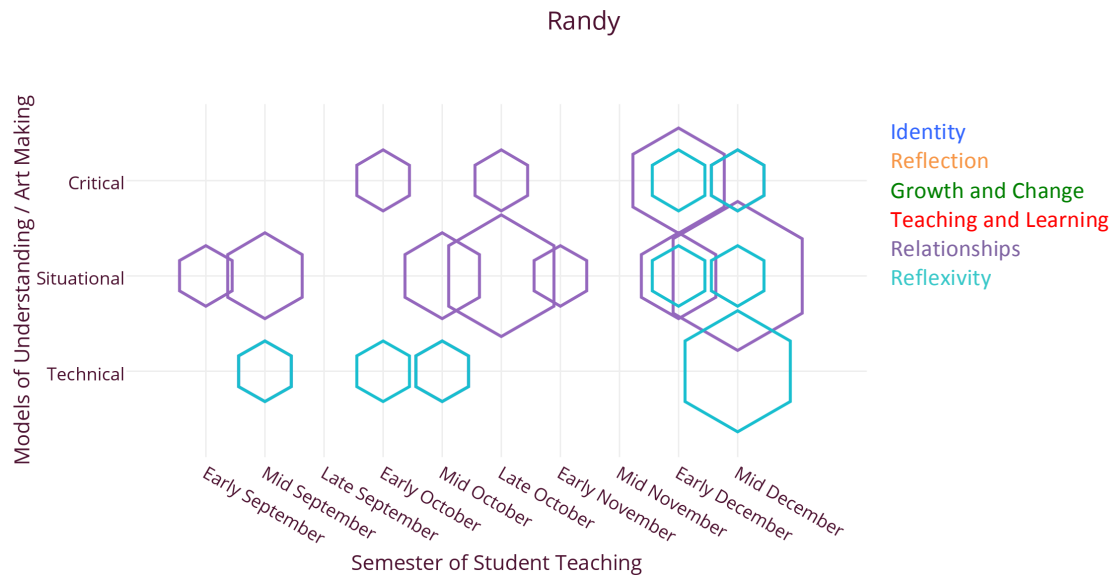


Figure 20: Randy: Relationships and Reflexivity

Though introverted, Randy is a personable and friendly person. He quickly learned that breaking out of his shell and making personal connections with his students was his preferred method of management. After the initial weeks as a student teacher, the number of times Randy mentioned or reflected upon his role and intention in the relationships he developed with his students greatly increased. Early in his second placement, with high school students, Randy mentioned missing his elementary students greatly. While his high school pupils were technically proficient and well behaved in class, the climate in Randy's second placement was less friendly among teachers and students, and he noted the lack of energy, engagement, and interaction many times.

In what Ruben playfully described as the "cliff hanger of the season," Randy had the epiphany that he preferred the elementary art classroom, and no longer wished to be a

shop teacher. Ever gracious and appreciative, Randy claimed that he would be thrilled with both. The data clearly shows that he understood and prioritized the relationships made in his placements quite highly. Randy made efforts throughout the semester to design and instruct lessons that were approachable and interesting to his students. He experimented with different media, methods of instruction, and even art styles in order to meet his students at their interest level. He considered this a typical part of the job. In reality, with the challenges of student teaching, the performance and completion of a lesson are usually highly valued over the students' interests. In this way, Randy was atypical and very reflexive.

## Ruben

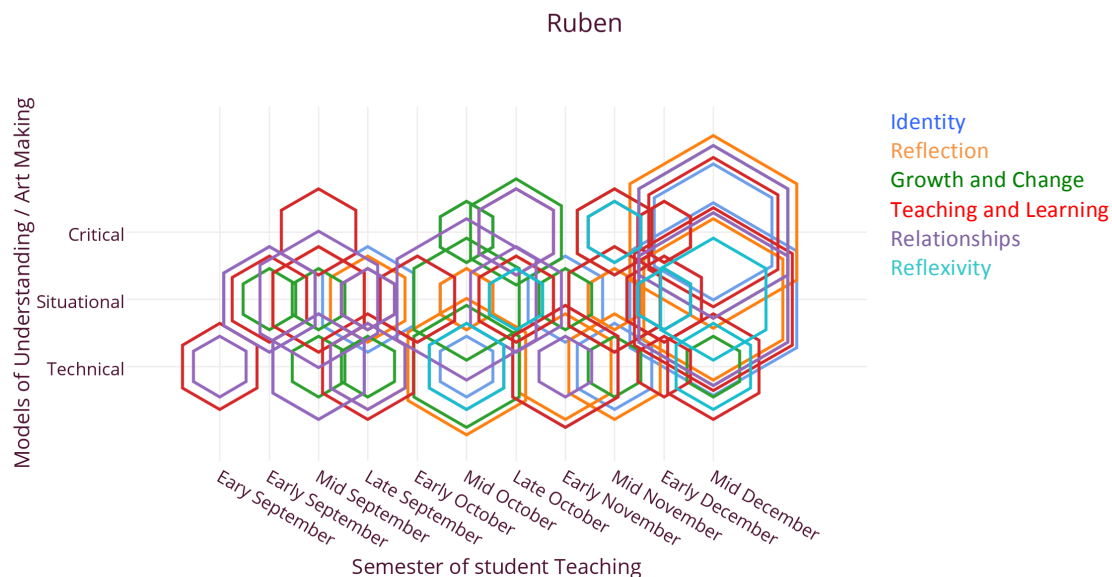


Figure 21: Ruben: All Themes

Ruben is keenly aware of his goals as an art educator, and takes the responsibility seriously. Ruben was typically the most outgoing and verbal during in-class sessions, and had the longest interview. He often spoke in absolutes: categorizing types of teachers, students, and behavior situations. Ruben seemed to find comfort in categorizing and normalizing his experiences and the individuals he worked with, while many of his fellow participants referred to specifics instead.

In his first piece (see Figure 22), Ruben expressed his preconceived notions of the population he would serve, utilizing a map in the background as a nod to the segment of the city's population he knew he would be interacting with in his first placement. He also created the city's skyline, and in the bottom left, an imagined scene of an adult and child overlooking a sunset. The symbolism here is clear, and the figures hand-holding intentional. Ruben was excited about the experience, and felt he had much to offer to his students in his role as a student teacher.



Figure 22: Ruben: First Triptych Piece

Ruben was incredibly driven as a student teacher, going into his first placement school a few days early to help the CT prepare the room for the year. His reasons for doing this were both practical and productive: by getting to set up the class, he would not only know the CT personally, but also thoroughly understand her plans for the year. This extra effort would leave him more familiar with the room, and the materials in it. He did this in order to focus entirely on meeting and building relationships with his students at the start of the year.

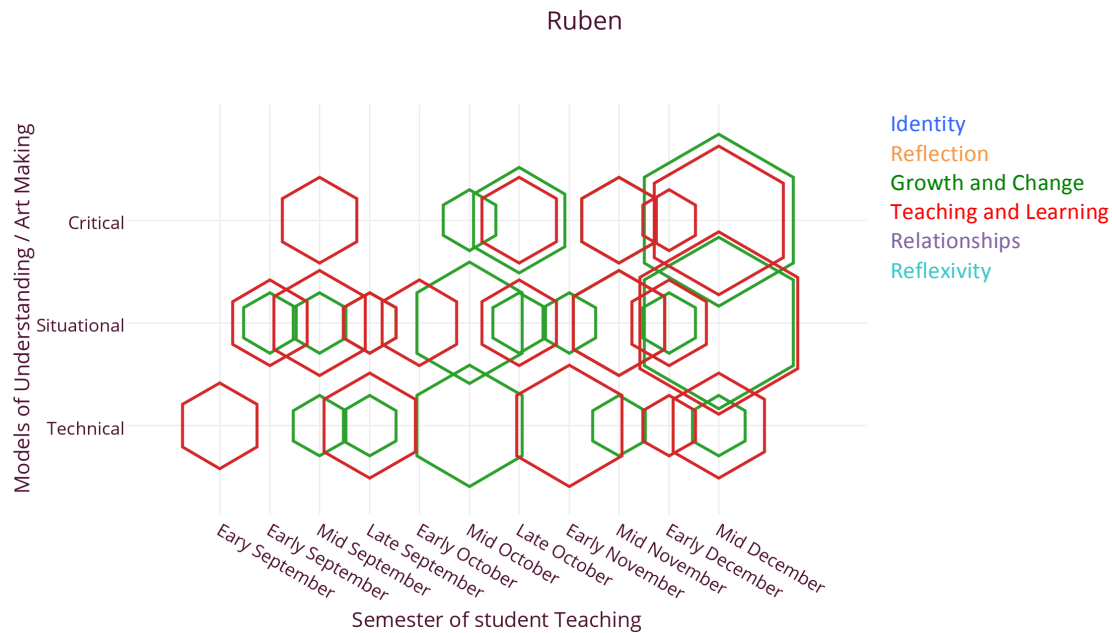


Figure 23: Ruben: Growth & Change and Teaching & Learning

In regards to his own growth and change, Ruben had specific motivations:

If anyone knows me at all, anything about me...I am very impulsive. I am an impulsive artist. Being a teacher though, like with the students, it's a grave responsibility. I am responsible for these children's minds. These parents, these [students] are their gifts. To you, this is their most prized possession and I take that very seriously. So I did my due diligence in preparing and getting ready. (personal communication, December 9, 2014)

This perspective may have been shaped by the fact that Ruben is a father as well, but his diligence was entirely for his students. Ruben created engaging and reflective lessons for his students, and sought to see every challenge as a learning opportunity.

Ruben sought to engage in his art as a process, and not simply as a product, for his second and third pieces (see Figures 24 and 27). When creating his second triptych (Figure 24), Ruben received feedback from his CT and Dr. Lilith to try to be more



flexible. He worked to be more adaptable in classroom situations, but also pushed himself to try unfamiliar art-making methods and allowed the outcomes to play out in his creations. Ruben felt that the arts-based research assignments brought more out of him as an artist as well as a teacher.



Figure 24: Ruben: Second Triptych Piece

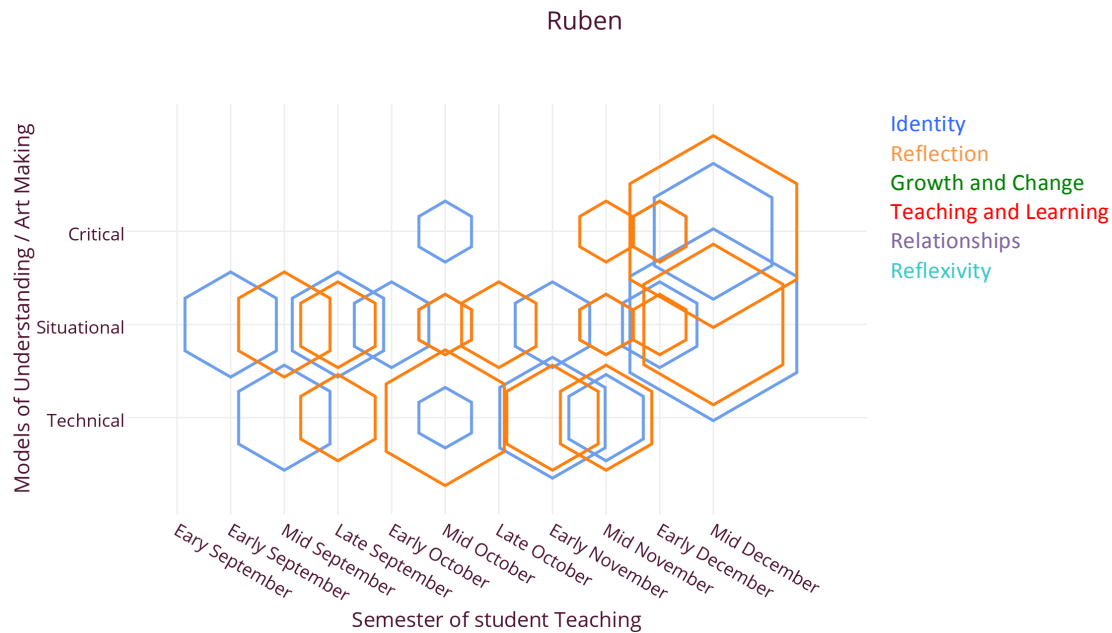


Figure 25: Ruben: Identity and Reflection

Success was an intrinsic factor for Ruben’s drive in his educational pursuits. As a leader among the preservice students, both at his university and the state-level art education organization, Ruben was deeply aware of his motives. When commenting on his personality, he shared:

In your head, you perceive yourself one way, but what people see is your behavior, your actions, you know? That is really what *tells* whoever you are, how you act...that is how they interpret you. It’s really reaffirming in some ways, but in some ways it’s kind of scary! (personal communication, September 8, 2014)

It was clear that Ruben also felt a strong drive to succeed, and to be *seen* as successful. In a moment of clarity when reflecting upon this drive, Ruben said:

I am totally a *yes man*. I don’t want to let people down; it’s often not even to fulfill my own desires, or wants, or needs. I can’t tell if it’s selfish because I want people to think I am capable of anything....Do I do it because I don’t want to fail them, or do I do it because I don’t want them to think I am capable of failure?

You know? It's really interesting trying to figure out why I do these things. They are all attributes of my personality. (personal communication, September 8, 2014)

Ruben was comfortable with this personality trait, and even attributed his brief career in the military as both a factor and a framer. He often compared his training for teaching to his training for combat. In a particularly entertaining parallel he mentioned:

I was an infantryman, and there was a rule: the plan goes out the window once the first shot is fired, and adapting and having flexibility...I'd do it in the most strenuous of circumstances. When other things can happen, we take that into account and have alternative routes, we have cause and effect plans. So we've practiced every single thing. We have immediate action drills. This is a work. Go to this. You know? So that's still partial planning...so I did my due diligence in preparing and getting ready, you know? So that they know I'm capable of flexibility, but so that they also know that I'm capable and that I see the need and the respect the responsibility of being prepared. (personal communication, December 9, 2014)

Ruben developed over the course of the semester in his lesson planning, but also in his adaptability to unique and unexpected circumstances.



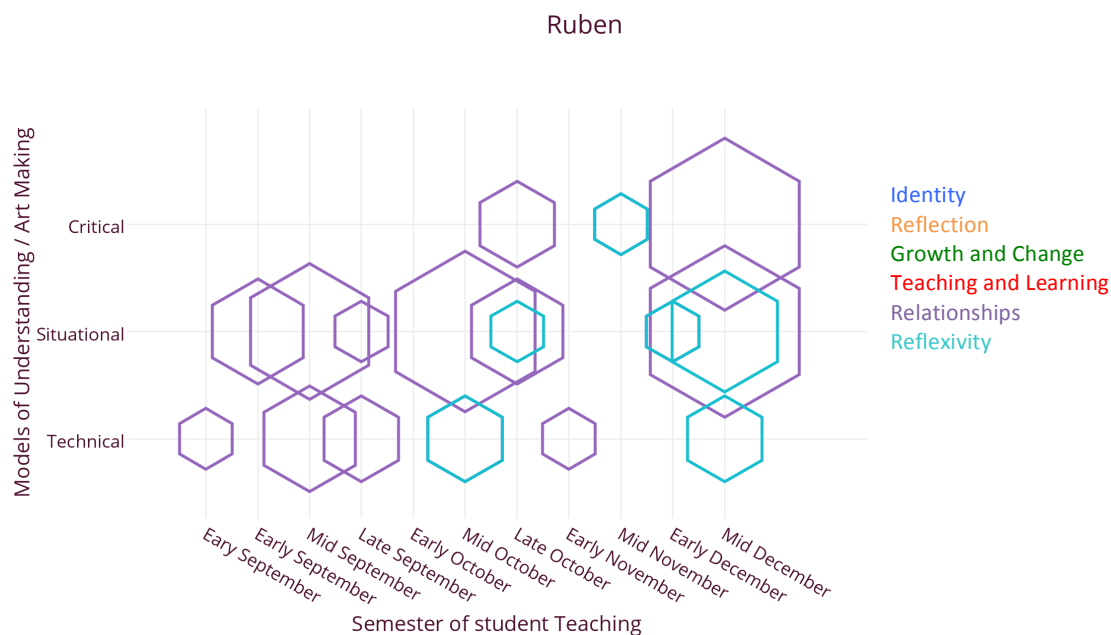


Figure 26: Ruben: Relationships and Reflexivity

The two themes that grew in both Models of Understanding/Art-making and frequency for Ruben were relationships and reflexivity. In fact, Ruben's development into an emerging reflexive teacher in such a short time made me aware of the theme for all other participants. Ruben responded to a suggestion to change a lesson at the mid-week point, which resulted in different classes of the same grade level receiving slightly different lesson instruction. Ruben expressed concern over the change, but acknowledged that the changes were needed, based on the students' needs. This evidence of altering behavior in order to provide an optimum learning experience exemplified a development beyond reflection to reflexivity.

Ruben realized that he was an intimidating presence to some students in his elementary placement, and adjusted his wording and demeanor to make his students more

comfortable. This effort was well established by the time Ruben entered his high school placement, so he chose to focus on relationships with students. Ruben pushed his students to experience and embrace the same experimentation that he was enjoying while creating his triptychs. Ruben shared his efforts to relate to his students as fellow makers, “I always tell them that ‘I’m growing and learning right here with you;’ it really helped with the rapport with my students” (personal communication, December 9, 2014).



Figure 27: Ruben: Final Triptych Piece

Ruben took photos of professional artists’ work, including the price tags, and shared them with his students. He felt a strong responsibility to instill in his students a sense of belonging and legitimacy in the art world. He chose to create lessons involving

contemporary artists or currently popular art techniques. More than anything, he encouraged a sense of exploration and the acceptance of failure in his classes. Ruben plans to continue his career as an art-making and reflective educator, with plans to encourage his future colleagues to participate in the local art community. He hopes this will develop rapport and encourage creativity with his future colleagues.

### **Zelda**

As the youngest and most *traditional* student participant in this study, Zelda transferred to the art education program from the studio program in her junior year. This caused her to have to take only one additional semester in order to fulfill the graduation requirements, and she was able to complete all of the same observation and pre-teaching experiences as her fellow participants.

Zelda's largest motivation to become an art educator was her first art educator, with whom she was very close as an elementary student. Zelda was an intelligent and observant individual, and enjoyed educational theory and philosophy topics in her university classes. She also created art on her own time, in addition to what she made her studio courses at the university.

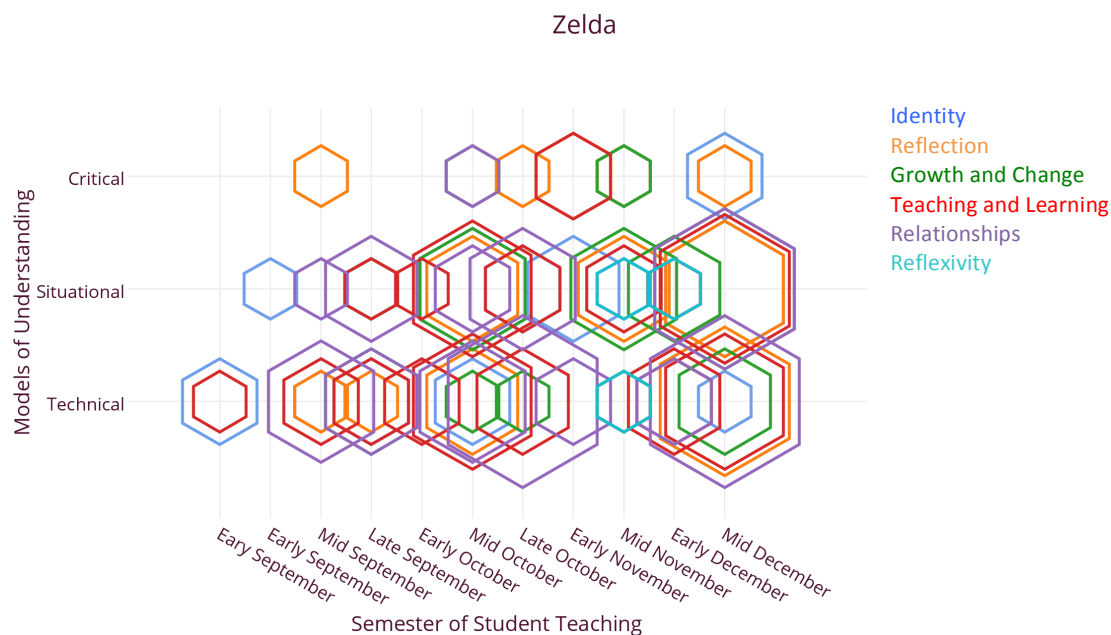


Figure 28: Zelda: All Themes

Zelda's frequency in the Critical Model of Understanding/Art-making was comparatively low in comparison to her fellow participants, but I do not believe this reflects a lack of reflection on the task at hand: student teaching. At the conclusion of the semester, Zelda had quite an epiphany. In retrospect, her realization seems to have been clearly developing throughout her triptych pieces and commentaries.

An increase in Zelda's frequency in commentary can be found in all themes of this study in mid October and late December, when she was asked to discuss her triptych pieces in class and on the blog. This large variation across the timeline of the study makes clear that Zelda did not often discuss matters involving identity, reflection, growth and change teaching and learning, relationships, and reflexivity. Instead, Zelda often

discussed specific teaching situations, speaking from her perspective, and stating the facts that affected her teaching moments.

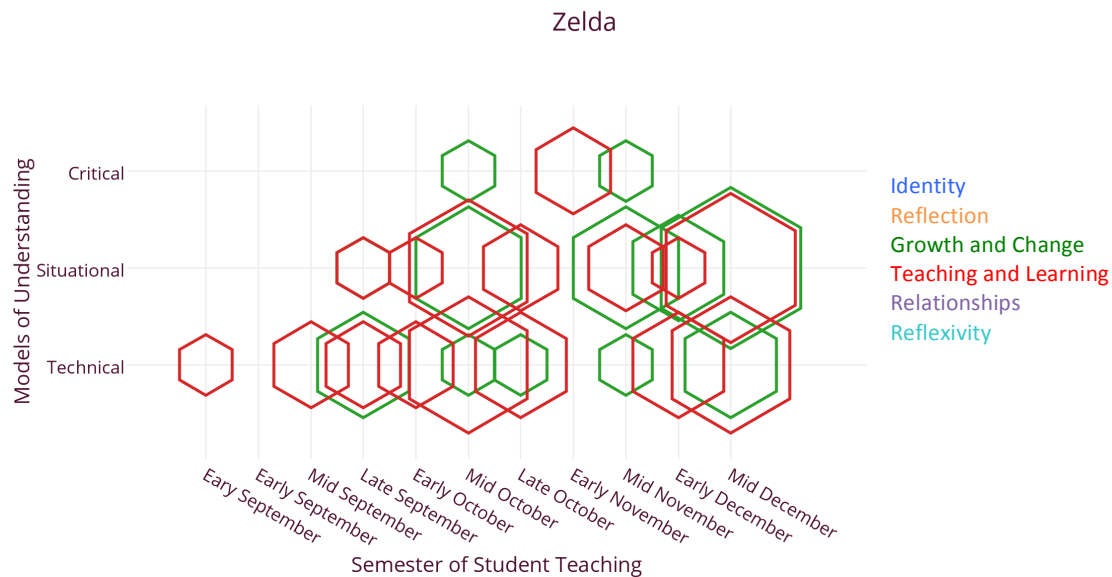


Figure 29: Zelda: Growth & Change and Teaching & Learning

The themes that show the highest increase in frequency for Zelda were growth and change, and teaching and learning. Zelda was aware of the challenges in her classroom, and was eager to discuss them with her fellow participants. She was relieved to hear similar stories to her own experiences, and to hear similar concerns from the very beginning. As she shared at the end of the year:

I feel like most of the clarity that I got from the whole thing was in the actual talking to the other people in class. Just because talking to the CT was a big part of it. It's kind of like, I do what I'm doing, where, you know you have all of this stuff to do it. You know you have the skills. But you still just aren't sure, you just have no way of measuring whether you're really doing this right or not. Until the kids actually start producing and you can see their attitude toward you. Up until then it's kind of like flying blind a little bit. Talking about it with other people



who had similar experiences really helped. (personal communication, December 6, 2014)

Zelda described Figure 29, a masked face with an outstretched hand, looking up to a separate area depicting a knitting activity as: “a digital collage expressing the overwhelming sense of responsibility for communicating broad ideas, empathy, and meaning prior to student teaching” (personal communication, September 22, 2014).



Figure 30: Zelda: First Triptych Piece

By mid-semester, Zelda was feeling that her progress as a teacher was forward and backward and that her victories were minute. She felt that her largest success in the classroom was trying to relate to the middle school students by connecting with what she remembered of herself at that age. This was an attempt to relate to the student

perspective, but she did not relate to the actual students in front of her. Even in this effort, she was taking her own perspective and imposing it upon the individuals she taught.

Zelda's reflections were similarly self-focused. Zelda often mentioned how the CT behaved in certain circumstances. She also expressed confusion at the formative and summative assessment process of the university, but did not ask questions for clarity. Zelda did not identify herself as a teacher in any generalized or constant way, and often spoke of stand-alone situations.

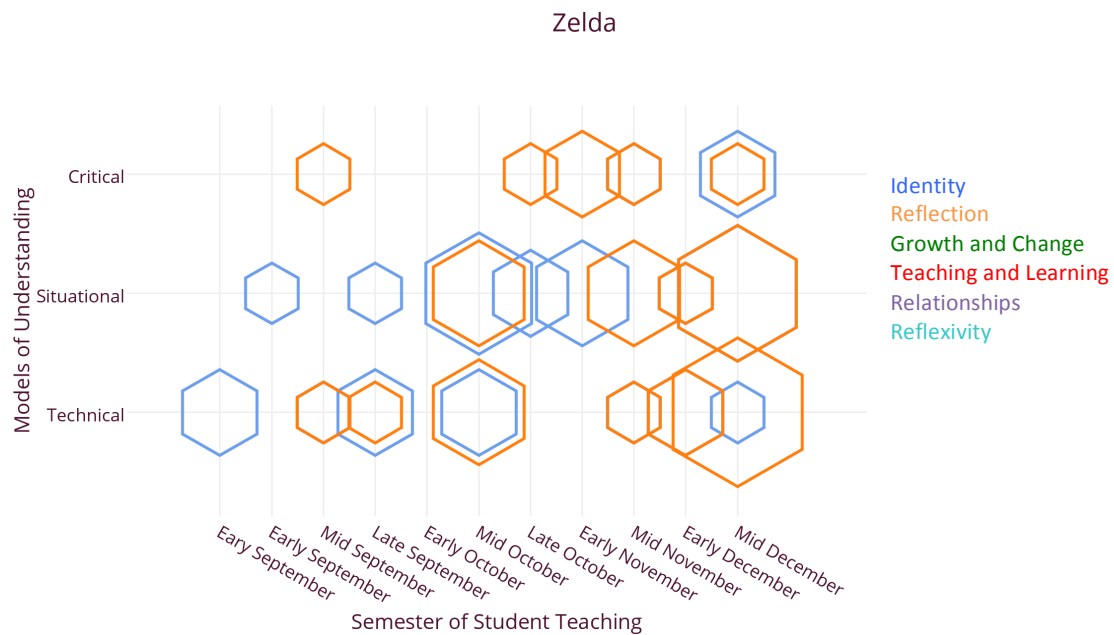


Figure 31: Zelda: Identity and Reflection



Figure 32: Zelda: Second Triptych Piece

Zelda's second triptych piece (see Figure 32) is an animated video illustration of hands holding pens and pencils circled around a blinking eye. Zelda commented that the pencils were added to express the back and forth learning that is student teaching. Though she did not expound upon this idea at the time of her blog post about the triptych, Zelda did make a point to share her challenges regularly in class discussions. One of her largest issues in the mid-placement time period in her middle school was a bullying incident. The students were teasing her for being so short. While she had often mentioned awareness that she was, and looked, quite young in comparison to most teachers, she was caught entirely off guard by her emotions involving this incident. Zelda was angry and



embarrassed, to the point that she did not address the matter as a teacher, and rather avoided discussing it all together. She did not reprimand or redirect the students who made the comments, and went about her class period as if she had not heard them. Zelda was obviously affected by the experience, blushing and getting angry when discussing it months later in her exit interview.

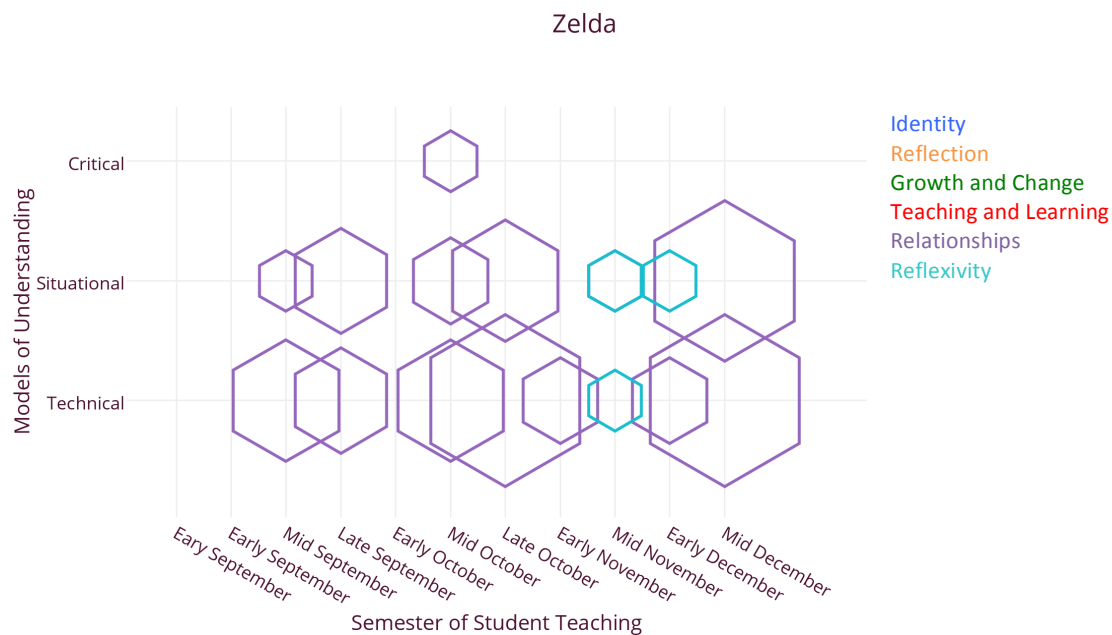


Figure 33: Zelda: Relationships and Reflexivity

Her experience with being teased in class was indicative of the relationships that she developed with her students during her time student teaching. She recounted her time early in the middle school placement:

There was one day where...early in my student teaching here in the middle school, my CT had to go for some reason to go do something and there was a sub all day. It is one of my earliest days. It was a demoralizing day. The kids were so, so, so bad. It was just bad behavior. And I thought ‘Oh my God! What have I done?’ (personal communication, December 6, 2014)

Such a situation would be tough to overcome, for any student teacher. Perhaps the tone was set for her placement during this experience. Zelda also entered the middle school with preconceived notions that were dispelled nearly immediately into her teaching:

People always talk of middle schoolers about how they are so, basically like they are basically high schoolers that they act like middle schoolers. They have high school art abilities, and they have, they love doing art! I heard that so many times. I found that to not really be the case. That was a preconceived notion that got shattered. When they did embody it, it was the seventh grade advanced class, and they didn't do a lot of advanced work. (personal communication, December 6, 2014)

These stories reflect Zelda's limited Critical degree of understanding in regards of relationships. Zelda realized that she did not want to go immediately into a teaching position during this time. She spoke to Dr. Lilith about this concern, and was reassured to find that there were probably many other options for her to pursue with an art education degree. Zelda had not felt completely successful as a student teacher, and decided that she was not interested in balancing her life as a teacher and artist. She also felt that teaching offered a narrow track as a career, and demanded a lot of the teacher. Zelda was interested in a job that she could leave at the office at the end of the day. At first she did feel some trepidation in admitting that she was no longer planning to teach:

yeah it's really weird to realize, and it's hugely frustrating to have done something and everyone is expecting that you do this thing right after you graduate and it's been very awkward when people are talking about where you can sign up for after you graduate? Or what location? And I was always like "I'm not into that right now." Awkward. (personal communication, December 6, 2014)

Zelda was proud of the organizational skills she had developed, the connections she had made, and the confidence in working with different groups she had gained. She intended

to look into a community or non-profit arts organization, or possibly an administrative or administrative position. By the final university class session, Zelda no longer felt awkward about her decision to seek alternate employment, but felt that she had several opportunities ahead of her. In her final triptych (see Figure 34), she incorporated an art form she had felt a huge draw to reengage with, bookmaking and paper cutting. The snowflakes she cut from the paper, starting very small, and eventually growing to extend beyond the edges of the paper, were created to symbolize her feelings of breaking beyond the edges of what she thought she could do with her art education preparation. Zelda felt excited about the opportunities before her.

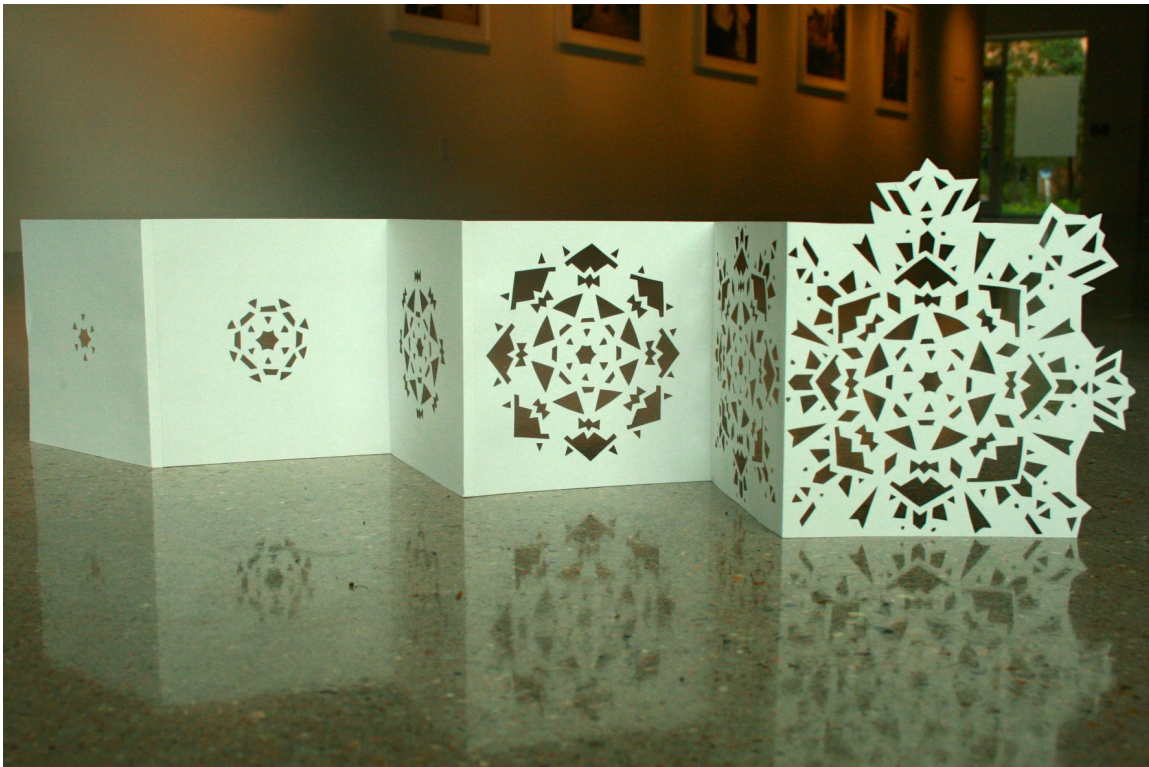


Figure 34: Zelda: Final Triptych Piece

When considering the Models of Understanding/Art-making, it is important to note that Zelda did not comment or express any reflection within the Critical stage. In this model, the individual reflects upon their place within, and as a part of, the situation, then identifies the changes and improvements they intend to create. Zelda most likely did not reach this stage because she had difficulty accepting her place as a part of the classroom. She was unable to focus on connections, growth, or ambitions in a career that she did not feel satisfied in. Luckily, Zelda left the program satisfied and having experienced some success in her efforts. She was confident and comfortable searching for the career that felt like a better fit for her. She did acknowledge that she may one day choose to return to the classroom, and was glad to have completed student teaching at this point in her life.

## **CONCLUSION**

Henderson (1992) makes a beautiful analogy to artistic creation and what I witnessed during the interactions of the preservice teachers/participants in class:

Just as writers, sculptors, painters, and composers must develop their craft, so must teachers. Throughout their careers, they must continually refine their skills in the general areas of program designing, lesson planning, and classroom management. They must become highly skilled problem solvers while engaged in complex teaching-learning activities. In other words, they must become masters of their particular classroom domain. (p. 16)

The participants of this study were able to discuss their issues openly, and Dr. Lilith provided an established framework of improvement, reflection, and reflexivity in their practices in their school placements. Students presented and solved problems through dialogue in each class. There were multiple and profound realizations of self, motivations, and perceptions of the benefits of art education.

Through art-making in the form of triptychs, posting blogs, conducting honest and open discussions in classes, and participating in end-of-semester interviews, the participants constantly reflected upon this very formative time. All four participants expressed gratitude for taking part in arts-based research, and planned personalized versions of this reflection style in their future endeavors.

This chapter catalogued the artwork created by each participant of this study, and has displayed the frequency of commentary in regards to the six themes that arose in the semester. In this chapter I have analyzed participants' notions of the classroom and the role of teachers within the Models of Understanding/Art-making for the themes of: identity, reflection, growth and change, teaching and learning, relationships, and reflexivity.

The final chapter, the conclusion, will discuss the meaning of these results, shifts in understanding that I experienced during my research, and the implications for the study. Also discussed are the possible implications for the field of art education, and the changes or considerations that might be made in future explorations similar to this study.

## Chapter Six: Conclusions, Questions, and Recommendations

### RESPONSE TO THE RESEARCH QUESTION

At the beginning of this study, I intended to address the question: *How does the use of a blog that incorporates art-making facilitate preservice teachers' reflective process and development of professional identities and traits?* In my efforts to answer that question, I devised a grounded theory research study that tabulated frequencies of each reported theme. While studying and aligning my position among the extensive research in art education preservice teacher preparation, I discovered that reflection was only a piece of the puzzle. Job satisfaction, reflexivity, opinion of teaching and learning, and perception of personal growth were all factors affecting emerging teachers.

These findings contributed to several shifts in my understanding of the emerging teacher. These shifts in my perception related directly to the preservice teacher who had not yet entered into the field, and the needs of the preservice teacher as they neared the end of their student teaching experience. Therefore, the research question for this study evolved to: *How does reflection contribute to preservice students' understanding of their development from student, to student teacher, to teacher?*

I collected my research data over the Fall 2014 semester in one course for art education student teachers. These participants' contributions; blog posts, in-class conversations, artistic creations, and end of semester interviews; informed my investigation. With these collection categories, I traced the frequency and degree of understanding of the following themes: identity, reflection, growth and change, teaching and learning, relationships, and reflexivity. Reflexivity was not common theme in the

new role of student teacher, but became evident in participants' processes during the semester. This shift in understanding was explored fully in Chapter Five.

While analyzing the incoming data throughout the semester, I found opportunities to reframe my research question, and shifts in emphasis were required to allow an optimum educational and reflective experience for the participants. For example, my initial focus on the blog posts of the participants shifted to rest equally in importance to the in-class contributions, and the art creations and reflections. By putting the notions from my initial research into my practice in the university course, I was fortunate to be able to adjust my study. These shifts were well received by the professor of the course, Dr. Lilith, and made clear the necessity of a reflexive professor at the helm of such a course.

#### **SHIFTS IN UNDERSTANDING: MODELS OF UNDERSTANDING/ART-MAKING**

As I thoroughly discussed in Chapters Two and Five, I assessed the participants' reflections of their student teaching experiences within the Three Models of Understanding/Art-Making (Pearse, 1983; Rolling, 2013). At the start of my research, I perceived the three models to serve as *levels* of understanding. The most basic model, *Technical Knowing*, categorized by focus on technique or practice, seemed to be the lowest, hierarchically. *Situational Knowing* appeared to be a more enlightened approach to understanding. Finally, *Critical Knowing* equated the highest and most necessary level of understanding, in my initial view.

However, the largest shift in my understanding over the entire timeline of this study was the realization of the equal benefit of each model of understanding for the

emerging art educator. When I saw no increasing frequency among all the three models within a single theme, I assumed a lack of development. This scaffolding I hoped to see was not necessarily the best representation of growth for each participant. I found that some participants' commentary remained in the *Critical Knowing* realm of a theme, but never achieved the *Technical Knowing*. Such a trend does not suggest a mastery of understanding of a theme, but rather, a conceptual and unpracticed understanding. When looking at the charts of development, the most well-prepared participants traveled the range of the models across the semester within every theme. In essence, a preservice educator really has it all when they have all three models of understanding.

#### **SHIFTS IN UNDERSTANDING: THE CORRECT AMOUNT OF PARAMETERS**

As I discussed in Chapters Three and Four, the parameters for the Fall 2014 semester's course were adapted from the previous semester's course. A few adjustments I made were based on several factors. The need for multiple data collection categories, the time of year, the size of the class, and the increased focus on reflection through art-making all led to the changes. One consideration that also drove my adaptations was the expression of frustration from the Spring 2014 course students. Several of the members of that class mentioned being overworked, and that they were not gaining anything from the assignments of the course.

In hindsight, I feel that I overcorrected the amount of parameters and requirements placed upon the Fall 2014 cohort. The art-making assignments were vastly undefined and left too much room for interpretation. Some participants explored and



spent lengthy amounts of time and effort in creations they truly considered to be artwork, and others completed creations solely for the purposes of the assignment. The suggestion, rather than requirement to respond to one another's blog posts left very little data or interaction in that category. While student teachers suggested that the parameters and workload were too high for the Spring 2014 semester, perhaps some requirements for the Fall 2014 assignments were too open-ended.

### **SHIFTS IN UNDERSTANDING: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A COHORT**

In direct relation to the shift in understanding in regards to parameters of a course, I also came to realize that art-making contributed to student teachers' reflection, but so did interaction with a cohort. While the Spring 2014 cohort boasted twelve in-town students and one student who Skyped in for in-class sessions, the Fall 2014 cohort consisted of only four students in total, and all were physically present for classes.

In my end of the semester interviews with the Fall 2014 cohort, each and every person commented on the benefit of shared experiences with other participants. This group of individuals found solace in hearing similar experiences from others, and benefitted from the insights of their classmates' reflections. This cohort genuinely appreciated each other's journey from student to student teacher to teacher. They rooted for one another, and offered kindnesses to one another in struggles. While all participants were keenly aware of the differences among the cohort: age, race, faith, personal and artistic interests, future goals, and worldviews, all were also appreciative of the shared experience.

While there is no way to replicate the persuasions and perspectives of any one person, let alone an entire cohort, I do think there must be some aspects to the course that create strong professional bonds, and encourage a familiar and safe space to grow and develop as an educator. I truly believe the other, completely underlying and almost assumed strength of this course, and my study as a whole, is the power of arts-based research and the reflection it offered to the participants. Individually the students contemplated on their experience more than they would have without planning to make art, diving into the process with the intent to reflect, making art, and finally talking about it with others. The social constructivist aspect of this class was made easier with the nature of sharing and discussing everyone's artwork, but the tone was maintained by the nature in which Dr. Lilith framed their classes.

#### **ENCOURAGING A PARTICIPATORY AND COLLABORATIVE COURSE**

Dr. Lilith is to be credited highly for the collaborative nature in which she operated this course. She not only considered the effects of her curricular decisions in my research outcomes. She also assisted me through all phases of the course with suggestions to improve my assignments, and showed a lot of flexibility when alterations to the agendas were needed for my research. Above all, she maintained the environment and continuous understanding that we, as all involved parties, were conducting research of our own throughout the course of the semester. Her steady recognition of her students, my participants, as arts-based researchers, framed their engagement, and enriched both their studies and my research. In short, her actions validated my research as participatory

and collaborative (Merriam, 1998). For such a class to exist and succeed again, there would need to be a similarly focused and driven professor to teach the course, encourage the bonds of the students, encourage open dialogue, and provide supportive feedback as the participants grew in their reflection and profession.

### **SUGGESTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS**

In my end of semester interviews with the participants of this study, I asked if there were any suggestions to improve the course they had completed. Among these suggestions were to add an environment of a true studio class at various class sessions. It was suggested that more dedicated studio days would have further developed the camaraderie of the cohort. Randy suggested that every class integrate art-making with the typical unpacking that occurred at the start of each class. Kayari expressed the exact opposite feedback, noting that she preferred to focus entirely on her art when reflecting and creating. Another suggestion was made by Kayari to include readings for discussion in class, but after further consideration she redacted this suggestion when she considered whether she would even have time to read while student teaching. Ruben made the best suggestion when referring to the opportunity to act as an arts-based researcher: “Don’t deny them this experience!” (personal communication, December 9, 2014).

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Throughout this research study, many other questions, hypotheses, and ambitions have emerged from participant responses, artistic creations, blog posts, and end of

semester interviews. The concept of teachers engaging in reflective activities is not a new one, but one that could be championed by art education, a field that relies on reflection for inspiration and engagement. There are several different iterations for this exact study that I mentally teased out over the course of my research.

Arts-based research has seen a lot of analysis as a methodology in its relatively young life. After having completed this study, I still do not feel that I have the expertise to analyze the methodology. In general, I believe that more people who have engaged in, or facilitated participants in conducting, arts-based research should weigh in on its use and effectiveness. Specifically, I would recommend more research on the preservice art teacher's path to professionalism through arts-based research.

In learning about Henry's (2013) categorization of work, as discussed in Chapter Two, I saw opportunity for the art education field to take and mold the three types of work into teacher preparation. Not only do *mapping* (planning), *making* (doing planned work), and *meshing* (generating better understanding of the context of one's work) lend themselves perfectly to the teacher's various workloads, but efforts made to balance and explore all three could be studied in an art education program.

Finally, to truly incorporate arts-based research as a form of reflection for future art education majors, I would recommend that this effort be implemented earlier in the art education program. Perhaps students would make art in response to preconceived notions and final outcomes of the very first student observation that preservice students attend. A larger scope of the transition from beginning student to the realization of the teacher role through art would be an excellent study to analyze. Developing such habits might also

increase the likelihood for art teachers to maintain a healthy art-making habit and a current portfolio.

I would like to see a more typical collection of college-age students complete a similar course. I would also be interested in the results of a similar study conducted with a more traditional student make-up for the university class, which is usually between 7-13 students who are mostly female. I believe that the blog post aspect to this study would be more strongly utilized, based on the fact that there would be more individuals speaking during the small 2-3 hours in-class sessions. The blog format has previously had higher use in this course when there were more students who needed a format to reflect upon their student teaching experiences.

#### **LIMITATIONS**

This study was conducted during a single semester, with a relatively small and nontraditional group of participants. One large factor in the success of this study may have been the fact that two of the participants were coming to art education after other careers. By enrolling and participating in this university's program, these atypical students had given up regular income from previously held full-time jobs to pursue this dream. This showed an above-average dedication to this career path, and places them at higher likelihood of seeing this goal through to completion.

#### **FINAL REMARKS: REFLECTIONS OF REFLECTING**

This study grew from a reflection upon my own undergraduate experience as an art education major. This was a highly transformative and transitional time in my life, and

as soon as student teaching was over, I was faced with experiencing the world as a working professional educator. There was little time to consider my desires and goals in my new career, and I merely wanted to succeed at pulling it off. It was the summer after my first year teaching before I attempted to make anything with my own two hands again. Not only had every thought for the past year been about my teaching challenges and goals, but I was rusty with my chosen art-making materials. I had neither the inspiration nor the regular practice to create anything.

Simply put, I want more for emerging educators. I want every possible success and benefit for art educators, but specifically I would hope that there was a way to make the transition from student to student teacher to teacher a smoother one. It could only benefit the emerging teacher to feel that his or her preparation program prepared them to balance their teaching career, and provided solutions for them to engage with their favorite subject, art.

Arts-based research and reflection for the student art educator has a lot of promise. I do believe that I have merely scratched the surface on best use of this method, as well as the best method of assessment for its effectiveness. Art teachers are required to engage with others, thrive within school settings, respond to hidden curriculum, plan and implement lessons with too little time and money to properly do the job, and they must remain connected to and aware of the world of art. This is such a tall order, and to add arts-based reflection seems to be asking for too much, at first glance. However, after conducting this research, I truly feel that reflection through art-making is a natural realm for personal and professional growth for the emerging educator. Reflection is sometimes viewed as a luxury, or even unnecessary. Likened to exercise or meditation, those who do not reserve a portion of their daily lives to do it see no use in it. For the teacher, I think dedicated reflection is as much a necessity as a planning period. There are, as Henry

(2012) states, even three different types of work. Art education, as a field, would do well to inform their emerging students of the need to reflect, and give them a natural and fulfilling method, art-making, with which to accomplish this task. In conducting this research, I have realized that this practice of packaging and delivering the concept of arts-based reflection to emerging preservice educators is the change I want to make in this field. As such, I have seen my way through the Three Models of Understanding in regards to my study. I feel that this study has created a technical way in which to deliver my message. I have also seen, and responded to, other people affected by the use of arts-based reflection in their lives. Finally, I understand what aspects of arts-based reflection can affect the art education field at large. Arts-based reflection is a helpful method for art educators to employ for the betterment of not only their careers, but their mental well-being, and I intend to both practice and teach arts-based reflection throughout my career.

## **Appendix A: Interview Questions**

### **END OF SEMESTER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Please share an abbreviated background on what you remember being your original connections to art, art education, or education in general. What got you here to where you are today?
2. How did you value or appreciate your experiences in this course, [REDACTED] 370, this semester?
3. What professional or personal ambitions are in your immediate future? Long-term goals?
4. Please describe the different ways in which you and the students communicated with one another.
5. What art-making did you engage in as a requirement for this class? Did you make any that were not part of this class?
6. How do you feel about your role as an arts-based researcher?
7. How did your engagement in art-making interact with your ideas and issues that were being talked about in class, or happening in your student teaching experience?
8. How would you describe your participation in the blog format? In-class sessions?
9. How did you use the dedicated studio time that was built into the class sessions?
10. Were there certain moments you found yourself thinking on, after the day was over, parts of your day/ class? Did you experience times that you wanted to express to someone else?
11. Would you say that you had any preconceived notions that you felt change during your student teaching?
12. How was art-making for our class meaningful, within the context of transitioning from student, to student teacher, to teacher roles?
13. Did you have anything you wrote, created, or planned that did not pan out exactly as planned?
14. What improvements or adjustments would you suggest for future versions of this class?



## **Appendix B: Class Syllabus**

**Visual Arts Studies/Art Education Division**  
**The University [REDACTED]**

**[REDACTED] 370 S All Level Student Teaching Seminar – Art**  
Unique Number: [REDACTED]  
Fall 2014

Instructor: [REDACTED]  
e-mail: [REDACTED]  
Office Address: [REDACTED]  
Office Hours : [REDACTED]  
Office Phone: [REDACTED]

### **Course Syllabus**

#### **Description**

This is a seminar course that is taken concurrently with the Student Teaching Practicum (EDC 950 W). The course meets once per week. The primary objective of this course is to enhance the student teaching experience through discussion, demonstration, presentation, reflection, and related activities. Another main goal is to further prepare students for their role as art teachers in the K-12 setting.

#### **Class Meetings/Format**

This course meets Monday 5-8 pm, unless otherwise specified. See calendar on Canvas for details. This is a blended course; some meetings will be held in 3.408 Art and some will take place on-line in Edmodo.

#### **Course Objectives**

By the completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate proficiency in a breadth of art content knowledge in order to prepare for the art [REDACTED] certification examination.
- 2) Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the pedagogy and professional responsibilities required to pass the [REDACTED] PPR examination.
- 3) Create and revise a personal teaching philosophy of art education.
- 4) Reflect upon professional skills related to teaching, including, but not limited to: interpersonal relations with students and colleagues, legal and professional ethics, classroom management, technology competency, and accurate, effective communication in both oral and written forms.

- 5) Demonstrate effective interviewing skills through a mock interview.
- 6) Demonstrate an awareness of the effects that physical, psychological, and cultural differences have on student/teacher relationships, and use this knowledge to develop strategies for effective classroom management and instruction.
- 7) Create an Electronic Portfolio that contains select artifacts of the student teacher's learning experiences throughout their coursework in the VAS program and student teaching. Artifacts will demonstrate various INTASC standards expected of all new teachers.

### **Texts**

Wong, H., & Wong, R. (2009). The first days of school: How to be an effective teacher. (optional)

### **Attendance and Course Policies**

Student teachers are not allowed any absences, except for extreme emergencies, during their field placements. Likewise, attendance in this weekly seminar is critical for your success in this course.

There are 12 required classes; you may earn up to 7.5 points for each class (90 pts.) and 10 points by attending a scheduled [REDACTED] arts event (10 pts.). Events can be found at: [http://www.\[REDACTED\]/academics/finearts](http://www.[REDACTED]/academics/finearts)

### **Additional Requirements and Grading**

1. Current NAEA membership: Join at: <http://www.arteducators.org> . (50 pts.)
2. Edmodo: this platform will be used for communication as well some class meetings and discussions, as well as announcements and schedule changes. (50 pts.)
3. Blog posts (exartedex.wordpress.com): This site will serve as a place to share reflection assignments. You will be required to post new visual art works that you create, respond to reflective questions posted by the instructor, and respond to classmate's postings. Your writing is expected to be grammatically correct. Visuals should demonstrate creative skill and effort. (200 pts.)
4. [REDACTED] Art Practice test: results, reflection, and revisions. (100 pts.)
5. PPR [REDACTED] Practice text: results, reflection, and revisions. (100 pts.)
6. Mock interview: preparation and participation. (100 pts.)
7. E-portfolio: completion of assignments on digication (NAEA). (100 pts.)
8. Triptych art piece: In a piece made over time and in changing scenarios, you will create artwork that serves as a visual product of personal reflection (200 pts.).
  - A. Teaching Philosophy before entering the classroom.
  - B. Changes/ developments to teaching philosophy during first placement
  - C. Changes/ developments/ comparisons and contrasts to teaching philosophy during second placement

Please Note: Students are expected to earn a B (83) or higher in this course.

Your final grade is based on the average of the above requirements.

A = 90-100, B= 80-89, C= 70-79, D= 60-69, F = 59 and below

Plus and minus grades will be assigned for the top three and bottom three points of each of the above grade ranges (i.e. C- = 70-72.9, C = 73-76.9, C+ = 77-79.9)

### **Academic Integrity/Plagiarism *From the Office of the Dean of Students***

Plagiarism can occur with ALL types of media- scholarly or non-academic, published or unpublished—written publications, Internet sources, oral presentations, illustrations, computer code, scientific data or analyses, music, art, or other forms of expression. Borrowed material from written works can include entire papers, one or more paragraphs, single phrases, or any other excerpts from a variety of sources such as books, journal articles, magazines, downloaded Internet documents, purchased papers from commercial writing services, papers obtained from other students (including homework assignments), etc... As a general rule, the use of any borrowed material results in plagiarism if the original source is not properly acknowledged. So you can be held accountable for plagiarizing material in either a final submission of an assignment OR a draft that is being submitted to an instructor for review, comments, and/or approval. For a thorough discussion of “Scholarly Dishonesty” at the University of [REDACTED].

### **Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students**

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at [http://www.\[REDACTED\]/its/help/utmail/1564](http://www.[REDACTED]/its/help/utmail/1564).

### **Students with Disabilities**

The University of [REDACTED] provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY.

### **Cell Phone Usage**

Please refrain from texting and phone calls during your time in the field as well as during class time. If you have an emergency, step outside so that you do not distract others from learning.

## **Safety**

The following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, [REDACTED]-471-5767:

- Occupants of buildings on The University [REDACTED] campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors.
- Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: [REDACTED] Fire Department, The University of [REDACTED] Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): [REDACTED]-232-5050 If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of [REDACTED] Police Department. Call 512-2325050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.
- Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: [REDACTED]

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